ISLAM

AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE MUSULMAN

BY

ANDRÉ SERVIER

TRANSLATED BY

A. S. MOSS-BLUNDELL

WITH A PREFACE BY

LOUIS BERTRAND

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PREFACE

I HAVE not the honour of M. André Servier's personal acquaintance: I only know "La Psychologie du Musulman," of which he has been kind enough to send me the manuscript. The work impresses me as excellent, destined to render the greatest service to the French cause throughout Northern Africa, and at the same time to enlighten the natives themselves as to their own past history.

What I admire most of all is his vigorous assault upon the great mass of French ignorance. One of the prejudices most likely to lead us to disaster lies in the belief that our African rule is nothing more than an incident in the history of the country, in the same way as we look upon the Roman dominion. There is a number of writers who persistently maintain that Rome made but a short stay in Africa, that she remained there but a century or two. That is a monstrous error. The effective empire of Rome in Africa began with the destruction of Carthage, 146 B.C., and it only came to an end with the Vandal invasion about the year 450 of the Christian era—say six hundred years of effective rule. But the Vandals were Christians who carried on the Roman civilization in its integrity, and who spoke and wrote Latin. In the same way, the Byzantines who

succeeded them, even if they did not speak Latin officially, were able to regard themselves as the legitimate heirs of Rome. That went on until the end of the seventh century.

So that Africa had eight hundred and fifty years of effective Latin domination. And if we consider that under the hegemony of Carthage the whole region, from the Syrtes to the Pillars of Hercules, was more or less Hellenized or Latinized, we arrive at the conclusion that Northern Africa had thirteen hundred years of Latinity, whereas it can only reckon twelve hundred years of Islam.

The numerous and very important ruins that even up to the present time cover the country bear witness to the deep penetration of Greco-Latin civilization into the soil of Africa. Of all these dead cities the only one the uninstructed Frenchman or even the Algerian knows is Timgad. But the urban network created by the Romans embraced the whole of North Africa up to the edge of the Sahara; and it is in these very regions bordering on the desert that Roman remains are most abundant. If we were willing to go to the trouble and expense of excavating them, were it only to bring to light the claims of Latinity in Africa, we should be astonished by the great number of these towns, and as often as not by their beauty.

M. André Servier is well aware of all this; but he goes a good deal further. With a patience and minuteness equally wonderful, he proves scientifically that the Arabs have never invented anything except Islam—that "secretion of the Arab brain," that they have made absolutely no addition to the ancient heritage of Greco-Latin civilization.

It is only a superficial knowledge that has been able to accept without critical examination the belief

current among Christians during the Middle Ages, which attributed to Islam the Greek science and philosophy of which Christianity had no longer any knowledge. In the centuries that have followed, the Sectarian spirit has found it to be to its interest to confirm and propagate this error. In its hatred of Christianity it has had to give Islam the honour of what was the invention, and, if we may so express it, the personal property of our intellectual ancestors.

Taking Islam from its first beginnings down to our own day, M. André Servier proves, giving chapter and verse, that all that we believe to be " Arab " or " Musulman," or, to use an even vaguer word, " Oriental," in the manners, the traditions and the customs of North Africa, in art as well as in the more material things of life—all that is Latin, unconsciously, or unknown to the outside world—it belongs to the Middle Ages we have left behind, our own Mediaevalism that we no longer recognize and that we naïvely credit as an invention of Islam.

The one and only creation of the Arabs is their religion. And it is this religion that is the chief obstacle between them and ourselves. In the interests of a good understanding with our Musulman subjects, we should scrupulously avoid everything that could have the effect of strengthening their religious fanaticism, and on the contrary we should encourage the knowledge of everything that could bring us closer together—especially of any traditions we may have in common.

It is certainly our duty to respect the religious opinions of the natives; but it is mistaken policy for us to appear more Musulman than they themselves, and to bow down in a mystical spirit before a form of civilization that is very much lower than our own and manifestly backward and retrograde. The times

are too serious for us to indulge any longer in the antics of dilettantism or of played-out impressionism.

M. André Servier has said all this with equal truth, authority and opportuneness. The only reserves I would make reduce themselves to this: I have not the same robust faith as he has in the unlimited and continuous progress of humanity; and I am afraid that he is under some illusion in regard to the Turks, who are still the leaders of Islam, and are regarded by other Moslems as their future liberators. But all that is a question of proportion.

I am willing to believe in progress in a certain sense and up to a certain point; and I have no hesitation in agreeing that the Turks are the most congenial of Orientals, until the day when we, by our want of foresight and our stupidity, provide them with the means of becoming once more the enemy with whom we shall have to reckon.

LOUIS BERTRAND.

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CHAPTER I

France needs a Musulman policy inspired by realities and not by received opinions and legends—We can only understand any given portion of the Musulman people by studying Arab history, because of the solidarity of all Musulmans and because Islam is nothing but a secretion of the Arab brain—There is no such thing as Arab civilization—The origins of the legend—How modern historians and the scholars of the Middle Ages were deceived—The Arab is a realist and has no imagination—He has copied the ideas of other peoples, distorting them in the process—Islam, by its immutable dogmas, has paralysed the brain and killed all initiative.

THAT France is a great Mahomedan Power may be a commonplace, but it is a truth that ceases to be a platitude, however often repeated, when we remember that our country holds in tutelage more than twenty million Mahomedans; and that these millions are firmly united by the solidarity of their religion to the formidable block of three hundred million adherents of the Prophet.

This block is divided superficially by racial rivalries, and even at times by conflicting interests. But such is the influence exerted by religion upon individuality, so great is its power of domination, that the mass forms a true nation in the midst of other peoples, a nation whose various portions, melted in the same crucible, obedient to the same ideal, sharing the same philosophic conceptions, are animated by the same bigoted belief in the excellence of their sacred

dogma, and by the same hostile mistrust of the foreigner—the infidel. Such is the *Musulman nation.*

Islam is not only a religious doctrine that includes neither sceptics nor renegades,[1] it is a country; and if the religious nationalism, with which all Musulman brains are impregnated, has not as yet succeeded in threatening humanity with serious danger, it is because the various peoples, made one by virtue of this bond, have fallen into such a state of decrepitude and decadence that it is impossible for them to struggle against the material forces placed by science and progress at the disposal of Western civilization.[2] It is to the very rigidity of its dogma, the merciless constraint it exercises over their minds, and the intellectual paralysis with which it strikes them, that this low mentality is to be attributed.

But even such as it is, Islam is by no means a negligible element in the destiny of humanity. The mass of three hundred million believers is growing daily, because in most Musulman countries the birth-rate exceeds the death-rate, and also because the religious propaganda is constantly gaining new adherents among tribes still in a state of barbarism.

The number of converts during the last twenty years in British India is estimated at six millions; and a similar progress has been observed in China, Turkestan, Siberia, Malaya and Africa. Nevertheless the active propaganda of the White Fathers is successfully combating Moslem proselytism in the Dark Continent.

It behoves us then, as Le Chatelier says, to make an intelligent study of Islam, and to found thereon

[1] De Castries, "L'Islam."

[2] André Servier, "Le Nationalisme Musulman"; P. Antomarchi, "Le Nationalisme Egyptien"; Henry Marchand, "L'Egypte et le Natme Egyption."

a Musulman policy whose beneficent action may extend not only over our African colonies but over the whole Musulman world.

We have got to realize the necessity of treating over twenty million natives in some better way than tacitly ignoring them. For they will always be the only active population of our Central and West African colonies, whilst their present numerical superiority in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco cannot fail to increase as time goes on.[1]

Only by a thorough understanding of the mentality and psychology of the Musulman, and by discarding prejudice and legend, can we achieve any really useful and permanent work.

It would be puerile to imagine that we can safely confine this study to our own Musulman subjects, with the object of governing them wisely. As we have already remarked, the Musulman is not an isolated individual; the Tunisian, the Algerian, the Moroccan, the Soudanese are not individuals whose horizon stops at the artificial boundaries created by diplomatists and geographers. To whatever political formation they may belong, they are first and foremost *citizens of Islam*. They belong morally, religiously, intellectually *to the great Moslem Fatherland*, of which the capital is Mecca, and whose ruler —theoretically undisputed—is the Commander of the Faithful. Their mentality has in the course of centuries been slowly kneaded, moulded and impregnated by the religious doctrine of the Prophet, and as this doctrine is nothing but a secretion of the Arab brain, it follows that we must study Arab history if we want to know and understand any portion of the Musulman world.

Such a study is difficult, not from any dearth of

[1] Alfred Le Chatelier, "La Politique Musulmane."

documents—on the contrary, they abound, for Islam was born and grew up in the full light of history—but because the Moslem religion and the Arabs are veiled from our sight by so vast a cloud of accepted opinions, legends, errors, and prejudices that it seems almost impossible to sweep it away. And yet the task must be undertaken if we wish to get out of the depths of ignorance in which we are now sunk in regard to Musulman psychology.

Jules Lemaître was once called upon to introduce to the public the work of a young Egyptian writer on Arab poetry. The author, a novice, declared with fine assurance that Arab literature was the richest and the most brilliant of all known literatures, and that Arab civilization was the highest and the most splendid. Jules Lemaître, who in his judgments resembled Sainte-Beuve in his preference for moderate opinions, felt some reluctance to countersign such a statement. On the other hand the obligations of courtesy prevented him from laying too much stress upon the poverty and bareness of Arab literature. He got out of the difficulty very cleverly by the following somewhat reserved statement:

"It is difficult to understand how a civilization so noble, so brilliant, whose manifestations have never lost their charm, and which in times past had so remarkable a power of expansion, seems to have lost its virtue in these latter days. It is one of the sorrows and mysteries of history."

As the observation of a subtle mind, accustomed never to accept blindly current opinions as such, this is perfectly justified. For if we admit all the qualities that are habitually attributed to Arab civilization, if we are ready to bow in pious awe before

the fascinating splendour with which poets and historians have adorned it, then it is indeed difficult to explain how the Empire of the Caliphs can have fallen into the state of decrepitude in which we see it to-day, dragging downward in its fall nations who, under other governance, had shown unquestionable aptitudes for civilization.

How is it that the Syrians, the Egyptians, the Berbers, as soon as they became Islamized, lost the energy, the intelligence and the spirit of initiative they exhibited under the domination of Greece and Rome? How has it come about that the Arabs themselves, who, according to the historians, were the professors of science and philosophy in the West, can have forgotten all their brilliant accomplishments and have sunk into a state of ignorance that to-day relegates them to the barbarous nations?

If we persist in asking these questions, it is for the sole reason that we have never really got to the bottom of the causes of the rapid expansion of Arab conquest, that we have never placed this conquest in its proper historical frame, in a circle of exceptionally favourable circumstances. We have never penetrated the psychology of the Musulman, and are consequently not in a position to understand how and why the immense Empire of the Caliphs went to pieces; how and why it was fated to collapse; how, stricken by paralysis and death by a rigid religious doctrine that dominated and controlled every act of daily life, every manifestation of activity, having no conception of material progress as an ideal worthy to be pursued, how this baneful influence has kept its adherents apart from and outside of the great currents of civilization.

In all that concerns Islam and the Musulman nations, we, in Europe, live under the shadow of an

ancient error that from the remotest epochs has falsified the judgment of historians and has often led statesmen to assume an attitude and come to decisions by no means in accordance with actual facts. This error lies in crediting the Arabs with a civilizing influence they have never possessed.

The mediaeval writers, for want of exact documentation, used to include under the designation of Arabs any people professing the Moslem religion; they saw the East through a fabulous mirage of those legends with which ignorance then surrounded all far distant countries; they thus laboured unconsciously to spread this error.

In this they were helped by the Crusaders, rough and coarse men for the most part, soldiers rather than scholars, who had been dazzled by the superficial luxury of Oriental courts, and who brought back from their sojourn in Palestine, Syria or Egypt, judgments devoid of all critical value. Other circumstances contributed equally to create this legend of Arab civilization.

The establishment of the government of the Caliphs in the North of Africa, in Sicily, and then in Spain, brought about relations between the West and the countries of the Orient. In consequence of these relations, certain scientific and philosophical works written in Arabic or translated from Arabic into Latin, reached Europe, and the learned clerks of the Middle Ages, whose scientific baggage was of the lightest, frankly admired these writings, which revealed to them knowledge and methods of reasoning that to them were new.

They became enthusiastic over this literature, and, in perfect good faith, drew from it the conclusion that the Arabs had reached a high degree of scientific culture.

Now, these writings were not the original productions of Arab genius, but translations of Greek works from the Schools of Alexandria and Damascus, first drawn up in Syriac, then in Arabic at the request of the Abbasside Caliphs, by Syrian scribes who had gone over to Islam.

These translations were not even faithful reproductions of the original works, but were rather compilations of extracts and glosses, taken from the commentators upon Aristotle, Galen, and Hippocrates, belonging to the Schools of Alexandria and Damascus; notably of Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, Porphyrius, Iamblichus, Longinus, Proclus, etc.[1] And these extracts already distorted by two successive translations, from Greek into Syriac, and from Syriac into Arabic, were still further disfigured and curtailed by the spirit of intolerance of the Moslem scribes. The thought of the Greek authors was drowned in the religious formulæ imposed by Islamic dogma; the name of the author translated was not mentioned, so that European scholars could have no suspicion that the work before them was a translation, an imitation, or an adaptation; and so they attributed to the Arabs what really belonged to the Greeks.[2]

The majority of the mediaeval scholars did not even know these works, but only adaptations of them made by Abulcasis, Avicenna, Maimonides and Averrhoës. The latter drew especially from the "Pandects of Medicine" of Aaron, a Christian priest of Alexandria, who had himself compiled certain fragments of Galen and translated them into Syriac. The works of Averrhoës, Avicenna and Maimonides were translated into Latin, and it was

[1] Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, "Hist. de l'Ecole d'Alexandrie."
[2] Snouck Hurgronje, "Le Droit Musulman."

from this latest version that the mediaeval scholars made acquaintance with Arab science.

It is well to remember that at that epoch the greater part of the works of antiquity were unknown in Europe. The Arabs thus passed for inventors and initiators when in reality they were nothing but *copyists.* It was not until later, at the time of the Renaissance, when the manuscripts of the original authors were discovered, that the error was detected. But the legend of Arab civilization had already been implanted in the minds of men, where it has remained, and the most serious historians still speak of it in this year of grace as an indisputable fact.

Montesquieu has remarked: "There are some things that everybody says, because somebody once said them."

Moreover, the historians have been deceived by appearances. The rapid expansion of Islam, which, in less than half a century after the death of Mahomet, brought into subjection to the Caliphs an immense empire stretching from Spain to India, has led them to suppose that the Arabs had attained a high degree of civilization. After the historians, the contemporary men of letters, in their fondness for exoticism, contributed still more to falsify judgment by showing us a conventional Arab world, in the same way as they have shown us an imaginary Japan, China, or Russia.[1]

It is in this way that the legend of Arab civilization has been created. Whoever attempted to combat it was at once assailed with Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid's presents to Charlemagne—that wonderful clock that struck with astonishment the contemporaries of the old Emperor with the flowing beard. Then so many illustrious names are quoted: Averr-

[1] Dr. Gustave Le Bon, "La Civilization des Arabes."

hoës, Avicenna, Avenzoar, Maimonides, Alkendi, only to mention those best known. We shall show later on that these names cannot be invoked in favour of Arab civilization, and that moreover that civilization never existed.

There is a Greek civilization, and a Latin civilization; there is no Arab civilization, if by that word is meant the effort personal and original of a people towards progress. There may, perhaps, be a Musulman civilization, but it owes nothing to the Arabs, nor even to Islam. Nations converted to Mahometanism only made progress because they belonged to other races than the Arab, and because they had not yet received too deeply the impress of Islam. Their effort was accomplished in spite of the Arabs, and in spite of Islamic dogma.

The prodigious success of the Arab conquest proves nothing. Attila, Genseric and Gengis Khan brought many peoples into subjection, and yet civilization owes them nothing.

A conquering people only exercises a civilizing influence when it is itself more civilized than the people conquered. Now, all the nations vanquished by the armies of the Caliph had attained, long before the Arabs, a high degree of culture, so that they were able to impart a little of what they knew, but received nothing in exchange. We shall come back to this later. Let us confine ourselves for the moment to the case of the Syrians and the Egyptians, whose Schools of Damascus and Alexandria collected the traditions of Hellenism; to North Africa, Sicily, and Spain, where Latin culture still survived; to Persia, India, and China, all three inheritors of illustrious civilizations.

The Arabs might have learnt much by contact with these different peoples. It was thus that the

Berbers of North Africa and the Spaniards very quickly assimilated Latin civilization, and in the same way the Syrians and the Egyptians assimilated Greek civilization so thoroughly that many of them, having become citizens of the Roman or of the Byzantine Empire, did honour in the career of art or letters to the country of their adoption.

In striking contrast to these examples, the conquering Arab remained a barbarian; but worse still, he stifled civilization in the conquered countries.

What have the Syrians, the Egyptians, the Spaniards, the Berbers, the Byzantines become under the Musulman yoke? And the people of India and Persia, what became of them after their submission to the law of the Prophet?

What has produced this illusion, and misled the historians, is the fact that Greco-Latin civilization did not immediately die out in the conquered countries. It was so full of life that it continued for two or three generations to send forth vigorous shoots behind a frontage of Mahometanism. The fact explains itself. In the conquered countries the inhabitants had to choose between the Musulman religion and a miserable fate. "Believe or perish. Believe or become a slave," such were the conqueror's conditions. Since it is only the rare souls that are capable of suffering for an idea—and such chosen souls are never very numerous—and since the religions with which Islam came into collision—a moribund paganism, or Christianity hardly as yet established—did not exert any considerable influence upon men's minds, the greater part of the conquered peoples preferred conversion to death or slavery. "Paris is well worth a Mass:" we know the formula.

The first generation, made Mahomedans by the simple will of the conqueror, received the Islamic

impress but lightly, keeping its own mentality and traditions intact; it continued to think and act, in consideration of some few outward concessions to Islam, as it had always been used to do. Arabic being the official language, it expressed itself in Arabic; but it continued to think in Greek, in Latin, in Aramaic, in Italian or in Spanish. Hence those translations of the Greek authors, made by Syrians, translations that led our mediaeval scholars to believe that the Arabs had founded philosophy, astronomy and mathematics.

The second generation, brought up on Musulman dogma, but subject to the influence of its parents, still showed some originality; but the succeeding generations, now completely Islamized, soon fell into barbarism.

We observe this rapid decadence of successive generations under the Musulman yoke in all countries under Arab rule, in Syria, in Egypt and in Spain. After a century of Arab domination there is a complete annihilation of all intellectual culture.

How is it that these people who, under Greek or Latin influence, have shown such a remarkable aptitude for civilization, have been stricken with intellectual paralysis under the Musulman yoke to such a degree that they have been unable to uplift themselves again, notwithstanding the efforts of Western nations in their behalf? The answer is that their mentality has been deformed by Islam, which in itself is only a product, a secretion of the Arab mind.

Contrary to current opinion, the Arab is devoid of all imagination. He is a realist, who notes what he sees, and records it in his memory, but is incapable of imagining or conceiving anything beyond what he can directly perceive.

Purely Arab literature is devoid of all invention. The imaginative element apparent in certain works, such as the "Arabian Nights," is of foreign origin.[1] We shall prove that in the course of this study. It is, moreover, this absence of the inventive faculties, a Semitic failing, that accounts for the utter sterility of the Arab in the arts of painting and sculpture. In literature, as in science and philosophy, the Arab has been a compiler. His intellectual beggary shows itself in his religious conceptions. In pagan times, before Mahomet, the Arab gods had no history, no legend lends poetry to their existence, no symbolism beautifies their cult. They are mere names, borrowed in all probability from other peoples, but behind these names there is—nothing.

Islam itself is not an original doctrine; it is a compilation of Greco-Latin traditions, biblical and Christian; but in assimilating materials so diverse, the Arab mind has stripped them of all poetical adornment, of the symbolism and philosophy he did not understand, and from all this he has evolved a religious doctrine cold and rigid as a geometrical theorem:—God, The Prophet, Mankind.

This doctrine is sometimes adorned by the nations who have adopted it and who have not the barren brain of the Arab, with quite an efflorescence of poetry and legend. But these foreign ornaments have been attacked with savage violence by the authorized representatives of Islamic dogma, and since the second century of the Hegira the Caliphs have decided, so as to avoid any variation of the religious dogma, to lay down exactly the spirit and the letter in the works of four orthodox doctors. It is forbidden to make any interpretation of the sacred texts not sanctioned by these works, which have fixed

[1] Dozy, "Essai sur l'Histoire de l'Islamisme."

the dogma beyond all possibility of change, and by the same stroke have killed the spirit of initiative and of intelligent criticism among all Musulman peoples, who have thus become, as it were, mumified to such an extent that they have stayed fixed like rocks in the rushing torrent that is bearing the rest of humanity onward towards progress.

From this time forward, the doctrine of Islam, reduced to the simplicity of Arab conception, has carried on its work of death with perfect efficiency inasmuch as it governs every act of the believer's life; it takes charge of him in his cradle, and leads him to the grave, through all the vicissitudes of life, never allowing him in any sphere of thought or activity the least vestige of liberty or initiative. It is a pillory that only allows a certain number of movements previously fixed upon.

To sum up: the Arab has borrowed everything from other nations, literature, art, science, and even his religious ideas. He has passed it all through the sieve of his own narrow mind, and being incapable of rising to high philosophic conceptions, he has distorted, mutilated and desiccated everything. This destructive influence explains the decadence of Musulman nations and their powerlessness to break away from barbarism; it equally explains the difficulties that confront the French in Northern Africa.

CHAPTER II

For any comprehensive knowledge of Islam and the Musulman, it is necessary to study the *Desert*—The Arabian Desert —The Bedouin—The influence of the Desert—Nomadism —The dangerous life—Warrior and bandit—Fatalism— Endurance—Insensibility—The spirit of independence— Semitic anarchy—Egoism—Social organization—The tribe —Semitic pride—Sensuality—The ideal—Religion—Lack of imagination—Essential characteristics of the Bedouin.

TO know and understand the Musulman, we must study Islam. To know and understand Islam, we must study the Bedouin of Arabia; and to know and understand the Bedouin, we must study the Desert. For the desert environment explains the special mentality of the Bedouin, his conception of existence, his qualities and his defects. Consequently it explains Islam, a secretion of the Arab brain; and finally it explains the Musulman that Islam has run into its rigid mould.

An immense plateau, rocky and sandy, 1,250 miles long with an average breadth of 500 miles, surrounded by a girdle of mountains with peaks rising 6,500 and occasionally 10,000 feet; between this lofty barrier and the sea a fertile strip of country 50 to 60 miles wide. That, in a few strokes, is the general aspect of Arabia.[1]

The plateau is indeed what the Bedouins call it,

[1] Palgrave, "A Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia"; Larroque, "Voyage dans l'Arabie heureuse"; Strabo, Lib. xvi.

"the land of terror and of thirst." Situated for the most part in the tropics, and shut off from the softening influences of the sea by a mountain wall that arrests the moist winds and causes the rain to fall on the coastal strip, it presents every variety of desert nature: the lava desert, or Harra; the stony desert, or Hammada; the desert of sand, or Nefoud; moving dunes, alkaline plains, and "sebkas," whose salt crust breaks under one's footsteps.

The whole scene is wild and mournful. Those gentle undulations that rest the eye in countries with a normal climate, where centuries of cultivation have formed the soil, are unknown in the desert. There everything is disjointed, rough, bristling with hostility. In the basaltic and millstone regions the rocks are hewn into sharp edges. The undulations of the surface are abrupt and steep, without any gradual transition.

If one could imagine the chain of the Alps submerged in alluvium up to within 300 to 500 feet of the summit, one would see nothing but a series of domes, peaks, needles, fallen rocks and denuded columns rising abruptly from the ground. That is what the Harra looks like, with its tortured skyline recalling vast cosmic upheavals.

Then there is the Hammada, a barren plain of stones, a vast glittering extent of naked rocks, with all the weariness of one colour, where the wind has swept away every particle of vegetable earth, where extremes of heat and cold have split up the soil into slabs and splinters—a monstrous chaos of broken stone, where no living thing can flourish.[1]

Further on is the Nefoud, a sea of sand passing out of sight, from whence emerge high dunes like huge waves petrified, with parallel gullies formed by

[1] De Laborde and Linnant, "Voyage dans l'Arabie Pétrée."

the wind that keeps them incessantly in motion. Of one uniform tawny tint, this barren plain is of an appalling monotony. It is the domain of death, and either burns or freezes. The porosity of the sand multiplies the surfaces of absorption and of radiation, and the sun by day heats it up to such a degree that one dare not venture across it; at nightfall it loses this heat almost instantaneously, and becomes covered with frost.

Under the effect of the wind which is bottled up in these gullies, possibly also from expansion, the dunes give out strange sounds, which add to the wild horror of the solitude. They literally hum, like a metallic top, and some travellers have compared the noise to that made by a thrashing-machine.[1]

Then there are vast stretches of gypsum, of a whiteness that is unbearable under the burning glare of the sun. And again there are the "sebkas," once salt lakes, now dried up, on the surface of which the salt mixed with sand forms a crust full of holes over a quagmire.

Throughout the country vegetable soil is very scarce. Reduced to an impalpable powder by the general dryness, it is carried away by the wind, and is precipitated by the action of rain in less dry countries. Being subject within the same period of twenty-four hours to torrid heat and extreme cold (140° to 18° Fahr.), swept by winds either burning or freezing but always dry, the soil, whatever its nature, is stricken with barrenness.

Vegetation is rare in the desert; in the absence of rain, it can only obtain nourishment from water in the subsoil, and so can only thrive in deep basins, where the water-bearing stratum is near the surface. There are a few stunted plants in the

[1] Gautier, "Le Sahara Algérien."

ravines and the wadies—long depressions at the bottom of which one may find a little moisture by digging—some Artemisias, Brooms and Halophytic plants. Here and there, in sheltered places, a few puny shrubs of acacia and tamarisk carry on a forlorn struggle against the ever-encroaching sand.

There are no rivers, no springs, a few wells, far apart, constantly being covered by the shifting sand, and having to be cleaned out every time by the thirsty traveller.

Any considerable collection of human beings is impossible amid such hostile natural surroundings; they would be decimated by hunger and thirst. So there are no towns, nor even villages; only starveling families, for ever preoccupied by the anxieties of their existence, wandering in these wastes strewn with ambushes.

But if, leaving these dreary solitudes, one crosses the mountain barrier enclosing them, one descends suddenly into a wonderful country. The coastal region, watered by sea breezes, fertilized by the wadies, which in rainy weather roll in torrents from the heights, is, in comparison with the desert plateau, a land of plenty and delight. Between Medina and Mecca this strip is widened by the granitic plateau of Nedjed, an important mountain mass that catches the rains and feeds numerous springs.[1] Here are wells that never dry up, and oases where beneath the palms there is a two-storied vegetation of fruit trees, cereals, and perfume plants. Here too are pastures where horses, camels and sheep can thrive.

These are the favoured countries of the Hedjaz, of Assir, Nedjed and the Yemen, of Hadramout and

[1] Maurice Tamisier. "Voyage en Arabie."

Oman, with populous towns such as Medina with Yambo as its port, Mecca with its port of Djeddah, Taïf, Sana, Terim, Mirbat and Muscat.

And yet the attraction of these fertile regions has not depopulated the desert. The Bedouin has remained faithful to his desert, and as, by the side of the sedentary, less active tribes of a gentler mode of living, he represents the man of action restless and brutal, it is he who in the end has imposed his manners and mentality upon the whole of Arabia. It is him, therefore, that we have to study.

No historical research is needed; immobility being the leading characteristic of the Arab tribes,[1] the Bedouin has not changed. Such as he was when Mahomet drew him from his idol-worship, so we see him exactly described in the book of Genesis, in the passages relating to Ishmael or Joseph, or well represented in the bas-relief of the palace of Nineveh recording scenes from the wars of Assurbanipal, even so is he at the present day.[2]

The desert condemns the individual to a special sort of life which develops certain faculties, certain qualities and certain defects. It is an existence full of difficulties, with danger everywhere; from the marauder prowling round the tent or round the flock, meditating a sudden dash: from the wind-enemy that dries up the water-hole and smothers the meagre vegetation in sand: from the rival who occupies a coveted pasture: from the soil that cracks into chasms.

The desert imposes as a first condition of existence —nomadism. It is not for pleasure that the Bedouin is always travelling, but from stern necessity. Culti-

[1] Dozy, "Hist. des Musulmans d'Espagne," t. i., p. 3; Delaporte, "La vie de Mahomet," p. 47; Larroque, op. cit. p. 109.

[2] Lenormant, "Hist. des peuples Orientaux," VI., p. 422; Strabo, Lib. v. 1; Noel Desvergers, "Hist. de l'Arabie."

vation being impossible on a barren soil deprived of vegetable humus and moisture, man is doomed to the shepherd's trade. But the pasturage, composed of sickly herbs growing in depressions sheltered from the wind, are of short duration and small extent. The flocks eat them down in a few days, when the shepherd must set about finding others; hence the necessity of being always on the move. When a pasture is found, he must make sure of its possession against other rivals, and, on occasion, use violence. It is a life of fever and of fighting, a rough and dangerous life.

But seldom can the Bedouin satisfy his hunger; he has everything to fear from nature and from man. Like a wild beast, he lives in a state of perpetual watchfulness. He relies chiefly upon robbery. Too poor to satisfy his desires, devoid of resources in an ill-favoured country, he is always ready to seize any chance that offers—a camel strayed from the herd provides him with a feast of meat: a sudden dash upon a caravan or the *douar* (camp) of a sedentary tribe furnishes him with dates, spices and women.

The practice of arms and the hard training he has always to live in have developed his warlike faculties; and, as it is these that enable him to triumph over the dangers of his wandering life and to procure the only satisfactions possible in the desert, he has come to consider them as his ideal.

The coward and the cripple are doomed to contempt and death. The respect of his neighbour is in proportion to the fear with which he inspires him. To win the praise of poets and the love of women, he must be a brilliant horseman, skilled in the use of sword and spear.

The women themselves have caught something of the martial spirit of their husbands and

brothers;[1] marching in the rearguard they tend the wounded and encourage their fighting men by reciting verses of a wild energy: "Courage," they chant, "defenders of women. Strike with the edge of your swords. We are the daughters of the morning star; our feet tread upon soft cushions; our necks are decked with pearls; our hair is perfumed with musk. The brave who face the enemy, we press them in our arms; the base who flee, we cast them off and we deny them our love."[2]

The necessity of providing for his own needs makes the Bedouin an active man; he is patient because of the sufferings he has to endure; he accepts the inevitable without vain recriminations.[3] It is not Islam that has created fatalism, but the desert; Islam has done no more than accept and sanction a state of mind characteristic of the nomad. His adventurous life gives the Bedouin courage, boldness, and if not contempt for death, at any rate a certain familiarity with it. Necessity compels him to be selfish. The available pasturage is too scanty to be shared, he keeps it for himself and his own people; it is the same with the watering place. He kills his infant daughters, who are the source of difficulties; and sometimes even his little boys, when the family is becoming too numerous. Hard on himself, he is hard upon others too; holding his life so cheap, he thinks nothing of his neighbour's. "Never has lord of our race died in his bed," says a poet. "On the blades of swords flows our blood, and our blood flows only over sword-blades."[4]

"We have risen," says another poet, "and our

[1] Dozy, "Hist. des Musulmans d'Espagne, t. i., pp. 16, 17; Perron, "Les femmes Arabes avant l'Islamisme."
[2] Caussin de Perceval, "Essai sur l'Hist. des Arabes avant l'Islamisme," t. ii., p. 281.
[3] Herder, "Idées sur la philosophie de l'Histoire," p. 343.
[4] El Samaoual.

arrows have flown; the blood which stains our garments scents us more sweetly than the odour of musk."[1]

"I was made of iron," Antar exclaims, "and of a heart more stubborn still; I have drunk the blood of mine enemies in the hollow of their skulls and am not surfeited."

In illustration of this insensibility may be quoted two incidents in the life of Mahomet: Seven hundred Coraïdite Jews who had been taken prisoner, were having their throats cut by the side of long graves, under the eyes of the Prophet; as night was falling, he had torches brought, so as not to put off the mournful business till the morrow.[2] A number of Arab captives, taken at Beder, were being put to death, to one of them who begged for mercy the Prophet said: "I thank the Lord that he has delighted my eyes by thy death"; and when the dying man asked who would take care of his little child, Mahomet replied: "The fire of hell."[3]

The solitary life of the Bedouin has developed his spirit of independence; in the desert the individual is free; he obeys no government; he escapes all laws. There is but one rule—the rule of the strongest.[4]

Sometimes, when their independence was threatened by neighbouring nations, Romans, Persians or Abyssinians, the tribes assembled together to defend their liberty, but as soon as the danger was past they dispersed. When Abraha-el-Achram invaded the Hedjaz with forty thousand Abyssinians, and after having reduced Tebala and Taïef set himself to penetrate the fortress of Mecca,

[1] Safy El Dine Il Holli.
[2] Savary, Koran, p. 47.
[3] Haines, "Islam a Missionary Religion," p. 96.
[4] G. Sale, "Observations historiques et critiques sur le Mahométisme."

the neighbouring tribes leagued together under the command of Abd-el-Mottaleb; but when once the enemy had been driven back, the tribes resumed their liberty.[1]

This spirit of independence, this exaggerated development of individuality appears at every turn in the course of Arab history. The Caliphs had to struggle without ceasing against the turbulence of the tribes, who were hostile to all regular government and incapable of submitting to discipline. It was these tribal rivalries that in the end broke up the unity of the Empire by adding an element of disturbance to the disruptive forces of the conquered nations.

The spirit of anarchy is characteristic of the Semite;[2] wherever he rules, there follows disorder and revolution. Jewish history, and that of Carthage, provide us with numerous examples; and, nearer our own time, the crisis of authority that has overturned Russia, has recruited its most powerful leaders and theorists from the Jewish element.

Any concentration of population is impossible in the desert owing to the lack of resources; at the same time, an isolated individual would be too feeble to contend with the dangers of a wandering life. Hence the Bedouins have been obliged to group themselves in families, and this is the basis of their social organization. The family enlarged has grown into the tribe, but the members of the same tribe do not all live together; they form small family groups united by the solidarity of birth and community of interests.

All the individuals of a tribe recognize the same

[1] Sedillot, "Histoire des Arabes," t. i., p. 43.
[2] Renan, "Etudes d'histoire religieuse."

common ancestor; they call this *acabia*, congenital solidarity, a rudimentary form of patriotism. In this way the Koreich, to whom Mahomet belonged, trace their descent back to Fihr-Koreich, of traditionally free origin, for he was regarded as the descendant of Ishmael by Adnan, Modher, etc.[1] The members of the same tribe are, literally, brothers; moreover this is the name by which men of the same age address each other. When an old man speaks to a young one, he calls him "Son of my brother."

The Bedouin is ready to make any sacrifice for his tribe; for its glory or its prosperity this egoist will risk his life and property. "Love your tribe," says a poet, "for you are bound to it by ties stronger than any existing between husband and wife."[2]

Throughout the whole course of Musulman history, wherever the Arabs are found, in Syria, in Spain, or in Africa, one notes the devotion of the individual to his tribe, at the same time as the rivalry between the different tribes. The notable upon whom the Caliph has been pleased to confer a high appointment loses no time in devoting himself to the interests of his own tribe, and at once arouses the anger of the others, who intrigue against him until they procure his disgrace, when the game begins over again with somebody else.

The Bedouin lives for himself and his tribe, beyond it he has no friends; his neighbour is the man of his tribe, his relation. Faithfulness to his pledged word, honesty and frankness only concern members of the tribe, the *contribules*.[3]

Each tribe selects as its chief the most intelligent,

[1] Seignette, "Traduction de Sidi Khelil," p. 708.
[2] Abu' Labbas Mohamed, surnamed Mobarred, quoted by Ebn Khallikan in "La vie des hommes illustrés."
[3] Dozy, op. cit. p. 40.

the most active and the bravest of its members, that is to say, the one best able to serve it. This is the boasted Amenokal;[1] he is not nominated until the actual election, a principle which was afterwards maintained in the selection of the earlier Caliphs. But his authority amounts to just what is possible among people thirsting for independence; his counsels are listened to; they are sometimes followed; he is not always obeyed.

The possession of wealth confers no title to public esteem, in the first place because it does not procure any particular enjoyment. What is the good of being rich in a place where there is nothing? The Bedouin who owns ten camels is just as happy as the man who owns a hundred, since all the advantage he can derive from them is confined to the milk on which he feeds himself and the fleece from which he makes his clothing. Besides, wealth is unstable. Represented solely by flocks and herds, it is at the mercy of an epizoötic, or of a raid. "When some hostile tribe attacks his own and takes from him all that he possesses, he, who yesterday was rich, finds himself suddenly reduced to beggary."[2] But though he may be ruined, the Bedouin does not despond, he has still his strength and boldness; stripped bare to-day, to-morrow he will avenge himself upon his enemy or on somebody else. He has, moreover, a high opinion of his person; he is a proud man. Pride is a Semitic failing; the Semite has always considered himself as of a superior race, the chosen of God.[3] This accounts for the religious intransigence of the Jew and the Musulman. "The Bedouin considers himself far superior not only to his slave,

[1] Pelliasier de Reynaud, "Annales Algériennes," t. iii., p. 429.
[2] Burckhardt, "Notes on the Bedouins," p. 40.
[3] Dido, "La fin des Religions," p. 12.

but to all men of alien race; he claims to have been made from a different clay from the rest of humanity."[1] He is temperate because he cannot be otherwise; but in reality he is a sensualist. In his adventurous excursions, under a burning sun, through barren regions, he appreciates the value of assured delights. His ideal is the simple one of a man of no possessions: to eat, to drink and to sleep. As a wandering horseman he longs to rest upon soft cushions; in a chronic state of semi-starvation, he dreams of savoury dishes heaped-up; parched with thirst, he longs for the coolness of never-failing springs. In a country where the beauty of the women lasts about as long as the roses, he dreams of women who never grow old. In short, he is a lover of free indulgence, who will stick at nothing to obtain the satisfaction of his desires.[2]

At fifty-three years of age, Mahomet fell in love with a little girl of eight, Aïsha. She seemed so young even in the eyes of the Arabs, that the Prophet, in spite of his authority, had to wait eight months before consumating his marriage.[3] One hardly likes to think of what the cohabitation of an impassioned old man with such a child can have been during the eight months of waiting.

One day, Mahomet cast his eye upon Zineb, the wife of Zaïd, a young man whom he had adopted. As the Prophet desired her, Zaïd made haste to put her away, when the Prophet promptly married her, notwithstanding murmurs of disapproval among his people.[4]

In Syria, in Spain, and in Egypt, countries of abundance, the Arabs very soon abandoned their

[1] Dozy, "Hist. des Musulmans d'Espagne," t. i., p. 8.
[2] Palgrave, "A Year's Journey through Central Arabia."
[3] Abulfeda, "Vie de Mahomet."
[4] Koran, Surat, xxxiii.

habits of sobriety and plunged into the worst debauchery.

Mahomet declared that he loved three things better than all else: perfumes, women and flowers. This might be the Bedouin's device; it is at any rate his ideal, and the Prophet did not forget it. His paradise is a place of carnal pleasures and material enjoyments, such as a nomad of the desert pictures to himself.

Ceaselessly absorbed by the cares of his adventurous life, the Bedouin concerns himself only with immediate realities. He fights to live and cares but little for philosophy. He is a realist, and not a theorist; he acts and has no time to think. His faculties of observation have been developed at the expense of his imagination, and without imagination no progress is possible. It is this that explains the stagnation of the Bedouin over whom centuries pass without in any way changing his mode of life.[1] The Arab is in fact totally devoid of imagination; a contrary opinion is generally held and must be revised. The impetuosity of his nature, the warmth of his passions, the ardour of his desires have caused him to be credited with a disordered imagination. His language, poor in abstract words, and only able to express an idea exactly by the help of similes and comparisons, has maintained the illusion. Nevertheless, the Arab is the least imaginative of beings; his brain is dry; he is no philosopher; and he has never put forth an original thought, either in religion or in literature.

Before Islam, the Bedouin, just emerged from Totemism, worshipped divinities personifying the heavenly bodies or natural phenomena: the stars, thunder, the sun, etc. But he has never had a

[1] Dozy. "Essai sur l'Histoire de l'Islam."

mythology. Among the Greeks, the Hindus, the Scandinavians, the gods have a past, a history; man has moulded them to his own likeness, he has given them his passions, his virtues, and even his vices. The gods of the Bedouin have no distinctive character; they are mournful divinities, one fears them, but one knows them not. The Arab Pantheon is inhabited by lifeless dolls, of whom, moreover, the greater part were brought in from outside, notably from Syria.[1]

Further, the Bedouin had not much respect for his idols; he was quite ready to cheat them by sacrificing a gazelle when he had promised them a sheep, and to abuse them when they did not respond to his wishes. When Amrolcais set out to avenge the murder of his father, on the Beni-Asad, he stopped at the temple of the idol Dhou-el-Kholosa to consult fate by means of the three arrows, called "command," "prohibition" and "wait." Having drawn "prohibition," which forbade his projected vengeance, he tried again; but "prohibition" came out three times running; he then broke the arrows and throwing the pieces at the idol's head, cried: "Wretch! if it had been *your* father that had been killed, you would not have forbidden me to avenge him."[2]

There is the same absence of imagination in the conception of Islam; its very simplicity is a reflection of the Arab brain; whilst its dogmas are borrowed from other religions. The principle of the unity of God is of Sabean origin; as is also the Musulman prayer and the fast of Ramadhan.[3] If the mosque

[1] "Lenormant," p. 469; Fresnel, "Lettres sur l'hist. des Arabes avant l'Islamisme."
[2] Dozy, "Hist. des Musulmans d'Espagne," t. i., pp. 21-22.
[3] Renan, "Etudes d'histoire religieuse."

is without adornment, that is not from any premeditated design, but simply because the Arab is incapable of adorning it; it is bare like the desert, bare like the Bedouin brain.

The Arab conception of the world was borrowed from the Sabeans and the Hebrews. The religious sects that came into being under the later Caliphs, and whose subtle doctrines exhibit an overflowing imagination, are of Indian and Egyptian inspiration. They represent exactly a reaction on the part of the subject peoples against the barrenness and poverty of the Musulman dogma and the Arab spirit.

In literature there is the same intellectual destitution. The Arab poets describe what they see and what they feel; but they invent nothing; if sometimes they venture on a flight of imagination, their fellow-countrymen treat them as liars. Any aspiration towards the infinite, towards the ideal, is unknown to them; and what they have always considered as of most consequence, even from the remotest times, is not invention but precision and elegance of expression, the technique of their art. Invention is so rare a quality in Arab literature that when one does meet with a poem or a story in which fancy forms any considerable element, it is safe to say at once that the work is not original, but a translation. Thus in the " Arabian Nights " all the fairy-tales are of Persian or Indian origin; in this great collection the only stories that are really Arab are those depicting manners and customs, and anecdotes taken from real life.

The oldest monument of pre-Islamic poetry, the Moallakat, are poor rhapsodies copied from one model: when you have read one of them you know the rest. The poet begins by celebrating his for-

saken dwelling, the spring where man and beast come to quench their thirst, then the charms of his mistress, and finally his horse and his arms.[1]

"When the Arabs, by virtue of the sword, had established themselves in immense provinces and turned their attention to scientific matters, they displayed the same absence of creative power. They translated and commented upon the works of the ancients; they enriched certain special subjects by patient, exact and minute observation; but they invented nothing; we owe to them no great and fruitful idea."[2]

From what has gone before, we may sum up the characteristics of the Bedouin in a few essential traits: he is a nomad and a fighter, incessantly preoccupied by the anxiety of finding some means of subsistence and of defending his life against man and nature; he leads a rough life full of danger. His faculties of struggle and resistance are highly developed, namely physical strength, endurance and powers of observation. Necessity has made him a robber, a man of prey; he stalks his game when he espies a caravan or the *douar* (camp) of some sedentary tribe. Like a wild beast, he sees a chance when it arises.

An egoist, his social horizon stops at the tribe, beyond which he knows neither friend nor neighbour. A realist, he has no other ideal than the satisfaction of his material wants—to eat, to drink, and to sleep. Having no time for thought or contemplation, his brain has become atrophied; he acts on the spur of the moment, we might almost say by his reflexes; he is totally devoid of imagination and of the creative faculty.

[1] See translation of the Moallakat by Caussin de Perceval.
[2] Dozy, loc. cit. pp. 13-14; Sedillot, "Hist. des Arabes," II., pp. 12, 19, and 82.

Finally, a simple creature, not far from primitive animality—a barbarian. Such is the man who has conceived Islam and who by the strength of his arm and the sharpness of his sword, has carved out of the world this Musulman Empire.

CHAPTER III

Arabia in the time of Mahomet—No Arab nation—A dust of tribes without ethnic or religious bonds—A prodigious diversity of cults and beliefs—Two mutually hostile groups: Yemenites and Moaddites — Sedentaries and nomads—Rivalry of the two centres : Yathreb and Mecca —Jewish and Christian propaganda at Yathreb—Life of the Meccans—Their evolution—Federation of the Fodhoul —The precursors of Islam.

KNOWING the desert and the Bedouin, it is not impossible perhaps to form some idea of what Arabia must have been in the time of Mahomet. There was no such thing as an Arab nation, if by that name we mean an aggregation of persons subject to a regular government, knowing themselves to be of common origin and pursuing the same ideal. Caussin de Perceval, who has collected into three volumes the chronicles relating to pre-Islamic times, has been unable to draw from these documents any *ensemble* of facts linked together logically that would convey the impression of a nation.[1] There is nothing but a dust, as it were, of tribes without connecting ties, without solidarity, in continuous conflict for trivial objects : cattle-lifting, abduction of women, disputed watering-places and pastures.[2] There is no community of origin, none of those traditions handed on from generation to generation that produce solidarity.

[1] Caussin de Perceval, "Essai sur l'Hist. des Arabes avant l'Islamisme."

[2] Prideaux, "Vie de Mahomet" ; Ockley, "Hist. des Sarrazins."

A barbarous country, cast like a barrier into the midst of the ancient civilizations of Asia and the Mediterranean, protected by its deserts from invasion and with barely accessible coasts, Arabia has served as a place of refuge for all fugitive peoples, oppressed or dispersed from Persia, India, Syria and Africa;[1] too poor or too savage she has escaped the great conquerors. Part of Syria was indeed under the rule of the Greek Emperors of Constantinople; the Arab coast of the Persian Gulf was under the domination of the kings of Persia; and a portion of the Red Sea littoral was for a time under the Christian kings of Abyssinia; but the influence of these conquerors was always confined to these restricted regions.[2] The ambition of the invaders was broken at the coast, and discouraged by the poverty of the country. "What is there to be found in your country?" asked a certain king of Persia of an Arab prince who had applied for the loan of some troops and offered in return the possession of a province. "Sheep and camels! I am not going to risk my armies in your deserts for such a trifle."[3] The only people who came to stay were fugitives and wanderers, all the wreckage of the old civilizations.

In the attempt to extract some general idea from the rubbish-heap of the Arab chronicles we may succeed in arranging these scattered families in two principal groups: the Yemenites, and the Moaddites.[4] The former, the *Aribas* of the Musulman writers, that is to say the Arabs properly so called, came from Irak and India two thousand years before the Christian era; they reigned in Babylon in 2218 B.C., and in Egypt at the same period under the name of

[1] Herder, "Idées sur la philosophie de l'Histoire," p. 420.
[2] Lenormant, op. cit. t. v., p. 337.
[3] Dozy, op. cit. p. 47.
[4] Sédillot, "Hist. Générale des Arabes," t. i., p. 24.

the Shepherd Kings. They established themselves in the Yemen, but were driven out later and dispersed over the whole of Arabia.[1] The latter, the *Moustaribas* of the Musulman chroniclers, that is to say "those who had become Arabs," came from Syria and Chaldea. A section of these immigrants, to which the ancestors of Mahomet belonged, claimed to be descended from Ishmael, the son of Abraham.[2]

A lively antipathy separated these two ethnic groups. The Yemenites had as their centre Yathreb, which subsequently became Medina: the Moaddites had Mecca. The Yemenites, established in fertile regions, became a settled people devoted to agriculture; the Moaddites were nomads, shepherds and camel-drivers.

This is merely an outline sketch; in reality, all these tribes, of whatever origin, lived in a state of the most complete anarchy—the anarchy of the Semite.[3] Without any bond to unite them, with no past, and with none of those great traditions that float like a flag over succeeding generations, constituting a common patrimony of pride and glory, these robbers and camel-drivers, shepherds and husbandmen, living from hand to mouth, have no history; their monotonous existence—a struggle for daily bread—leaves no more trace than the camel tracks on the sand of the desert dunes.

There is not even any religious connection;[4] each tribe had its protecting idol, a vague souvenir of the worship of their forefathers. Here and there a few Jewish tribes from Syria, some Christian tribes from

[1] Sylvestre de Sacy, "Mémoire sur l'Histoire des Arabes avant Mahomet."
[2] Kazimirsky, "Introduction à la traduction du Koran," p. 9.
[3] See Diodorus of Sicily, Liv. ii.; Herodotus, Lib. iii.; Strabo, Lib. xvi.; Dion Cassius, Lib. liii.
[4] Burckhardt, op. cit. p. 160.

Syria or Abyssinia, with others from Persia devoted to Sabeism or Manicheeism, presented a prodigious diversity of worship and belief. There was no government, no social organization beyond the family and the tribe. Neither art nor literature is to be found among men absorbed by the anxieties of a dangerous life; there are indeed a few rhapsodical poems bearing a distant resemblance to the songs of our troubadours. There was no other ideal than the satisfaction of immediate wants, no aim in life beyond the pursuit of the daily subsistence—a prey, a lucky dash, a copious meal, such was their ideal; it might perhaps suffice for an individual shrunk into his own egoism, it could never be the ideal of a nation.[1]

These warriors and robbers were willing epicures, and their poets would seem to draw their inspiration from the same source as Horace: "Let us enjoy the present, for death will soon be upon us."[2] However, in the midst of this general anarchy of tribes, wandering or sedentary, one fact has stood out clearly from the remotest ages—the antagonism of the Yemenites and the Moaddites; it is the old quarrel between the settled people and the nomads, between the husbandman and the shepherd. This antagonism was carried on into the conflict between Yathreb and Mecca.

Yathreb, more favoured than Mecca as regards climate, built against the moist mountain mass of Nejed, was surrounded by fertile lands. Its inhabitants devoted themselves to agriculture and petty trading, and as these are stationary occupations, they became sedentary. Their manners grew gentler, so much so that after centuries of quiet life,

[1] Burckhardt, op. cit. p. 41.
[2] Moallaka of Amr-Ibn-Kolthoum.

they constituted at the time of Mahomet a peaceable population of cultivators, artisans and small shop-keepers.[1] The Jews and Christians, who had come in considerable numbers from Syria, propagated their religious doctrines; and the Christian ideas of human brotherhood and forgiveness of injuries had in a vague way got into men's minds. The Jews, cradled in the old Messianic tradition, spoke freely of the coming appearance of a messenger from God. The worship of idols, undermined by both Jews and Christians, was to a certain extent abandoned. In short, in a period of general anarchy, Yathreb was a town in which order was maintained, and was the most peaceable city in Arabia.[2]

Mecca, 250 miles to the south-west, lying in a sandy hollow, surrounded by bare and barren hills, was the abode of unruly men engaged in stock-breeding and the important caravan traffic. In contact with sea-faring nations through its port of Djeddah, it had become the principal entrepôt of whatever trade there was at that time between the Indies and the countries of the West—Syria, Egypt and even Italy.[3] To Mecca came the caravans from India and Persia, laden with a precious freight of ivory, gold-dust, silks and spices.

The men of Yathreb, wishing to share these tempting profits, had tried hard to divert a portion of the traffic to their city; in this they had not succeeded, for three reasons: firstly, because the caravans preferred Mecca as a sort of half-way house. Lying at an equal distance of thirty days' march from the Yemen and from Syria, it allowed them whether on the outward or on the return

[1] Larroque, "Voyage dans la Palestine," p. 110.
[2] G. Sale, "Observations hist. et critiques sur le Mahométisme," p. 473.
[3] Carlyle, "Heroes," p. 80.

journey, to winter in Yemen and to spend the summer in Syria.[1] Secondly, because the Meccans, being enterprising people, did not wait for the great caravans, but organized small private caravans of their own, bartering the products of Syria, Egypt and Abyssinia against those of the Euphrates valley, of Persia and of India. The camels of the Koreich were loaded with costly burdens in the markets of Sana and Merab, and in the ports of Oman and Aden.[2] The people of Mecca became the carriers of the desert, the brokers between the peoples of Asia and the Mediterranean. The men of Yathreb, husbandmen and small shopkeepers, were incapable of any such enterprise. Finally, because Mecca had always been from the remotest ages, a place of pilgrimage, to which men repaired to bow down in the temple of the Kaaba before a certain black stone said to have been brought down from heaven in the time of Abraham by the servants of God Almighty.[3] Diodorus of Sicily records that, in the lifetime of Cæsar, the Kaaba was the most frequented temple in Arabia. The Koreich, the tribe to which Mahomet belonged, were the guardians of this temple, an office that brought them in appreciable profits.

Thus both religion and commerce made Mecca an important social centre, bringing her great prosperity, and thereby exciting the envy of the men of Yathreb. They detested the Meccans, who returned the sentiment with interest. Moreover, they disliked them for their licentious mode of living. Rich, broad-minded, troubled by few scruples, idolaters, recognizing no law beyond the satis-

[1] Qot'B Eddin Mohammed El Mekki, "Hist. de la Mekke."
[2] Massoudi.
[3] Sedillot, op. cit. t. i., p. 12; Dr. Lebon, "La Civilization des Arabes," p. 117.

faction of their own desires, the Meccans were hedonists, holding in contempt the refinements of morality.

A poem of the period gives an exact idea of their moral state: "In the morning, when you come," says the poet to his friend, "I will offer you a brimming cup of wine, and if you have already enjoyed this liquor in deep draughts, never mind; you shall begin again with me. The companions of my pleasures are young men of noble blood, whose faces shine like the stars. Every evening, a singer, dressed in a striped robe and a saffron-coloured tunic, comes to brighten our company. Her dress is open at the throat; she allows amorous hands to stray freely o'er her charms. . . . I have devoted myself to wine and pleasure; I have sold all I possessed, I have dissipated what wealth I acquired myself as well as that which I inherited. You, Censor, who blame my passion for pleasure and fighting, can you make me immortal? If all your wisdom cannot stave off the fatal moment, leave me in peace to squander everything on enjoyment before death can reach me. To-morrow, severe Censor, when we shall both of us die, we shall see which of us two will be consumed by a burning thirst."[1]

The men of Yathreb were narrow-minded, of the peasant and shopkeeping spirit, and were moreover influenced by Jewish and Christian propaganda; they lived parsimoniously on small profits and quick returns. Compared to the wealthy caravan-owners of Mecca, who were great business schemers, they were small men, of austere morals, of regular habits, peaceable temperament and affable.[2] The Meccans treated them with sovereign contempt, as

[1] Tarafa.
[2] Es-Sahmoudi, "Hist. de la Médine. Trad. Wüstenfeld."

misers, cowards and eunuchs. Returning insult for insult, the men of Yathreb called them bandits and highwaymen.

Religion was dragged into the quarrel. The Jews established in Yathreb had succeeded in converting certain families of the Aus and the Khazdradj. The Meccans, attached to the old idolatrous worship, not from religious conviction but by mundane interest, since the Kaaba attracted many visitors and customers, took advantage of these conversions to lash their adversaries with the epithet of Jews.

The rivalry between Yathreb and Mecca was of considerable importance; for, in the midst of general disorder these two towns represented the only centres of Arab thought. It was their quarrels that favoured the development of Islam, and at a later date became the cause of troubles and divisions in the Musulman Empire. If Mahomet, disowned by the Meccans, hunted and threatened with death, had not found refuge and support at Medina, it is more than probable that his great adventure would have miscarried, and that his name would have fallen into oblivion like those of so many other prophets of the same period.

Owing to their enterprising spirit, the Meccans soon became very rich. The caravan trade, doubled by the trade in slaves, returned huge profits. These Bedouins became all at once merchant princes, and gave themselves corresponding airs.

Prosperity has its effect upon character; it diminishes the fighting spirit, and produces a conservative tendency. One does not risk one's life without thinking twice about it, except when one has nothing to lose; bellicose nations are always the poorest, and among fighting men the keenest in a raid are those who are not yet loaded up with booty.

The well-to-do man wishes to enjoy his competence, and this he can only do when order and security prevail. Having acquired wealth, the men of Mecca intended to live a pleasant life; their interests were seriously compromised by the general state of anarchy that prevailed, under cover of which their caravans were being held up to ransom by robber bands, and by the conflicts between tribes which also interfered with their traffic. They were very indignant at these acts of brigandage on the part of the Bedouins, and preached respect for the property of others. Being men of action, the Meccans were not content merely to advocate the principles of order, they took steps to impose them. With this object several important personages of the tribe of the Koreich founded a sort of league, in A.D. 595, called *Hilfel Fodhoul*, or the Fodhoul federation. The Fodhoul intended to combat by every available means the anarchy that was so injurious to trade and consequently to their interests; they first attempted to suppress, or at least to reduce the conflicts between tribes by instituting *truces*, or suspensions of hostilities, under the most diverse pretexts: such as the Holy Month, a pilgrimage, important markets, etc.[1] They even strove to bring the tribes together in groups, to federate them, using different methods to secure their object.

They began with what one might call an appeal to Arab patriotism; that is, to their hatred of the foreigner. In this connection an event occurred that favoured their projects. The Abyssinians, led by the Negus Abrahah, had made an attempt to take Mecca, whose wealth excited their envy. The neighbouring tribes, under the threat of a common danger, had agreed to combine under the leadership of Abd-

[1] Al Kazouini and Al Shahrastani.

el-Mottaleb, and had repulsed the enemy. The Negus having then turned his arms against the Yemen, had been driven out by the tribes united under the command of a Hemyarite prince.[1] On receiving news of this last success, Abd-el-Mottaleb went in person to Saana to congratulate the Hemyarite prince in the name of the Koreich. This was a noteworthy step, as signifying solidarity, when sons of the same Fatherland drew together in mutual understanding. As soon as the enemy had been driven out, the tribes at once resumed their liberty; but the Fodhoul, encouraged by the success of their initiative, set to work to exploit the Bedouin sentiment of xenophobia. Circumstances favoured their propaganda, since the Abyssinians on the west, the Greeks on the north, and the Persians on the east were all threatening Arabia. The Fodhoul were also contemplating a unification of the language, as a means of bringing the tribes together. People can only agree when they understand each other, and for this to be possible they must speak the same language. But Arabia was a perfect Babel of different dialects; the thread running through them all was certainly Arabic, but debased in each tribe by mispronunciation, or by the use of local expressions, to such an extent that a Bedouin of Nejed could not understand a man from the Hedjaz, and the latter could not make himself understood by his fellow-countryman of the Yemen.[2]

The Fodhoul made very clever use of the poets, a sort of bards or troubadours, who sang the exploits of warriors and of lovers in every tribe. "These bards

[1] Caussin de Perceval, op. cit.; Sylvestre de Sacy, "Mémoire sur l'hist. des Arabes"

[2] Sylvestre de Sacy, "Hist. des Arabes avant Mahomet."

were commissioned to create a more general language. Their verses, which were recited everywhere, were to fix once for all the words intended to represent ideas : when several families made use of two different words to express the same idea, the word the bard had chosen was the one to be adopted, and thus the Arab language was gradually formed."[1]

Finally, the Fodhoul tried to create unity of religion—a difficult task—as each idolatrous tribe had its own protecting divinity; but there were Jewish tribes at Yathreb and at Khaibar, Christian tribes in the Hedjaz and the Yemen, whilst the Sabean creed and Manicheeism counted their adherents on the shores of the Persian Gulf. Each tribe held to its own beliefs. The Fodhoul could not dream of fighting against idolatry, since the temple of the Kaaba brought many visitors to Mecca. As astute men, superior to vulgar superstition, they conceived the ingenious idea of melting all the different creeds together so as to make one, and thus satisfy everybody. They drew the outlines of a sort of Arab religion which, whilst respecting the ancient customs of the Bedouins, would find room for certain Sabean, Jewish, and Christian beliefs. That is how they came to adopt the Sabean principle of one God over all; and the Messianic idea of the Jews as to the coming appearance of a prophet charged to establish the reign of justice. As certain tribes claimed to be descended from Abraham, they made a great deal of this patriarch, to please the Jews and Christians.

It is evident that the Meccans, whose minds had been widened by foreign travel, were very clever men. In working, from commercial interests, for

[1] Sedillot, op. cit. p. 44.

the *rapprochement* of the tribes and for a fusion of beliefs, they were, without suspecting it, clearing the ground for Islam. The Fodhoul were the precursors of Mahomet, who, moreover, being a member of their league, without doubt drew from this association many ideas the source of which could not be accounted for in any other way.

CHAPTER IV

Mahomet was a degenerate Bedouin of Mecca—Circumstances made him a man of opposition—His lonely and unhappy boyhood—Camel-driver and shepherd—His marriage to Khadija—His good fortune—How he conceived Islam—Islam was a reaction against the life of Mecca—His failures at Mecca—He betrays his tribe—His alliance with the men of Yathreb—His flight—First difficulties at Medina—How he had to resort to force—The principal cause of his success: the lure of booty—The taking of Mecca—Triumph of the Prophet—His death.[1]

KNOWING the Bedouin of Mecca, that is to say the nomad transformed by city life, by long journeys abroad, and by wealth acquired in the caravan trade, it is possible to understand what Carlyle called "*The Man Mahomet.*" Mahomet was a Bedouin of Mecca, but a degenerate Bedouin; and, in addition, he was through force of circumstances always in opposition to the environment in which he lived: a rebel against

[1] There is a great wealth of books dealing with Mahomet: Abulfeda, "Life of Mahomet"; Ibn-Hisnam, "Sirat-el-Resul"; Tabari, "Chronicle"; Gagnier, "Life of Mahomet"; Prideaux, "Life of Mahomet"; Boulainvilliers, "Life of Mahomet"; Turpin, "History of the Life of Mahomet" and "History of Al Koran"; Sprenger, "Life and Education of Mahomet" and "Mahomet and the Koran"; Weil, "The Prophet Mahomet" and "History of the Islamic Peoples since Mahomet"; Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, "Mahomet and the Koran"; Garcin de Tassy, "A Statement of the Musulman Faith" and "Doctrines et devoirs de la religion musulman"; Castries, "L'Islam"; Charles Scholl, "L'Islam et son fondateur"; Maracci, "Introduction à la traduction du Koran"; Oelsner, "Mahomet."

the only sentiment the Bedouins held in common—*tribal clanship*.

He misunderstood and tried to injure the interests of his tribe and of his native city. His propaganda was carried on against the Koreich and the Meccans, in spite of all they could do, with the support of their enemies. The reasons for his attitude may be easily explained.

In comparison with the wealthy magnates of Mecca, Mahomet was a pauper. His family, the Hachems, formerly well-to-do, had fallen upon evil days, until they had become the poorest family in the Koreich. They were living upon the guardianship of the temple of the Kaaba, that is to say, upon the gifts of the pilgrims.[1] Mahomet's childhood was passed in poverty and sadness; to a feeble father and mother, weakened by privation and sedentary life, he owed a sickly constitution and excessive nervousness. Silent and impressionable, subject to epileptic attacks, his character became more gloomy still from the fact of his wretched condition. Loving solitude, "always tormented by a vague uneasiness, weeping and sobbing like a woman when he was not well, wanting in courage, his character formed a strange contrast with that of the Arabs—hardy, energetic, and warlike, who knew nothing of day-dreams and considered it a shameful weakness that a man should shed tears, even for the loss of the objects of his most tender affection."[2]

He was a degenerate Bedouin, stunted by a sedentary life. His youth was one long struggle against poverty. He lost his father two months after he was born (570), and six years later his mother, Amina, a gentle, sickly creature subject to

[1] Weil, "Le Prophète Mohammed."
[2] Dozy, op. cit.

hallucinations.[1] From his earliest years he knew the harsh lot of an orphan without means, in a community where power and wealth alone received consideration. He suffered in silence from his feebleness, his poverty and the contempt with which he was treated by the rich caravan-owners about him. He withdrew into himself; his character hardened, and from that time he must have felt some animosity towards the people of Mecca.

On the death of his mother (576), he was taken in by his grandfather, Abd-el-Mottaleb, a kind old man, who had no time to surround him with the family affection he needed, as he died three years later (579). Young Mahomet then passed into the family of his uncle, Abu-Taleb, who as a busy man of affairs had no time to waste in maudlin sentimentality. Being a man of action, he made what use he could of the child; he made him a camel-driver, and it was in this capacity that Mahomet, between the age of ten and fourteen, made several journeys into Syria and the neighbouring countries.

It is claimed, though without much probability, that in the course of these journeys he made the acquaintance of a Nertorian monk, who taught him the elements of Christianity.[2] Mahomet was then very young to get any good out of such lessons, and it is probable that later on he had better opportunities of getting to know the Christian principles in Arabia itself, where the followers of the Galilean were numerous. On his return from these journeys, Abu-Taleb having collected together the tribes around Mecca to repulse the Negus Abrahah's Abyssinians, Mahomet had for the first time to face the dangers of war. Nervous, impressionable and sickly, he

[1] Kasimirsky. Introduction to the translation of the Koran, p. vii.

[2] Prideaux, "Vie de Mahomet."

could not bear the sight of the battle-field; he ran away, and as this behaviour exposed him to the ridicule of his associates, he left his uncle's service and did not go back to Mecca.[1] To gain his daily bread he had to become a shepherd: the poorest of trades and the humblest social position. He was then twenty-five years of age (595). He felt his position so humiliating that he accepted a job as assistant to a travelling cloth merchant named Saib. The chances of business led Saib and his new man to Hayacha, an important market to the south of Mecca; there Mahomet made the acquaintance of a rich widow, Khadija, who was engaged in the caravan trade. He entered her service, first as camel-driver, then as manager, and finally as partner.[2] He served her with devotion and gratitude, for he was grateful to her for having rescued him from misery. Khadija was forty, and in a country where feminine beauty fades so early she might have been considered an old woman; still, passion was not yet extinct in her heart.

Like all neurotic subjects, Mahomet submitted to the influence of his surroundings and of circumstances; poverty had made him timid and taciturn; prosperity gave him back his assurance, and an active life his vigour. Khadija fell in love with him; it may have been the last passion of a woman before the inevitable renunciations of old age, or the necessity of taking a second husband to look after her interests. Mahomet, who had known the hard school of poverty, did not reject the opportunity that chance had thrown in his way; he married Khadija. He married her more from gratitude than from love; possibly interest may have had some share in his decision.

[1] Sprenger, "Vie et enseignement de Mahomet."
[2] Abulfeda, "Vie de Mahomet," trad. Noel Devergers.

Henceforth his future was assured. He devoted his energy and his intelligence to the development of his business. For ten years he led the rough and spacious life of a caravan leader. At thirty-five he was a rich man. He was at that time a fine strong fellow, hardened by misfortune, softened by experience, educated by travel and association with his fellow men, believing in his star, sure of his own ability and parts. His cousin Ali, son of Abu-Taleb, has drawn a living portrait of him: "He was of medium height, with a powerful head, a thick beard, his hands and feet rough; his bony frame denoted vigour; his countenance was ruddy. He had black hair, smooth cheeks and a neck like that of a silver urn."[1]

From thirty-five to forty Mahomet enjoyed the comforts of his affluence, but in a simple way, without ostentation. In his young days he had been offended by the ostentatious way in which the Meccans lived; he was careful not to fall into the same snare.[2] He lived, moreover, apart from his fellow-citizens and even from the people of his own tribe, whom he did not like, as the mere sight of them brought back recollections of his unhappy childhood. They on their part held him in but light esteem; they had known him when he was poor, and they grudged him his rapid rise to fortune, accomplished without any assistance from them, by a marriage with an elderly widow, a ridiculous bargain in a country where masculine pride demands young virgins hardly yet veiled; they reproached him for his breakdown on the field of battle; some of them had seen him crying like a woman; in short, they looked upon him as an inferior being.

[1] Abulfeda, op. cit. p. 94.
[2] De Castries, "L'Islam," p. 49.

Mahomet lived alone with Khadija, giving free rein to his dreamy and contemplative temperament. Every year, during the sacred month of Rhamadan, he withdrew to a mountain near Mecca, Mount Hira, whose caves provided a natural shelter. There in the solemn calm of silence and solitude, he remained whole days in meditation. It is not impossible to imagine the basis of his thoughts: he was certainly not dreaming the grandiose dreams that some historians have alleged. Islam did not spring all at once from his brain, like Minerva from the brain of Jove; he was not aiming so high nor so far ahead, and if the dim light that glimmered in one corner of his skull has since become a dazzling brilliancy, it has been due to circumstances that the future prophet neither foresaw nor could have foreseen. Devoid of imagination, like most of the Bedouins, it was not of the future that Mahomet was dreaming in his cave on Mount Hira, but of the past and of the present. He saw once more his youth of wretchedness, of privations and humiliations among the wealthy Meccans, at a time when, alone and poor, he had been obliged to accept the most humble employments in order to keep body and soul together. He thought of the insolent pride of these caravan men, enriched by their boldness and by the renown amongst the idolatrous tribes of the temple of the Kaaba, that Pantheon of pagan divinities. He thought of the injustice of this barbarous society, where the weak were the victims of the strong. He thought of the abomination of the inter-tribal conflicts, and above all of that unhappy battle where he had gone through all the apprehension of fright and where he had incurred the disgrace of flight under the eyes of his fellow-citizens. Possibly he may have recalled to memory some of the ideas dear to the

Fodhoul: the reconciliation of the tribes by the unity of beliefs and the pursuit of a common object; possibly also he may have thought of the propaganda of the Jews of Yathreb, in favour of one God.[1] One God! that would mean the suppression of the idols of the Kaaba, it would be a blow dealt to the authority of Mecca. This idea pleased him as it gratified his spite; and from the spirit of opposition, he was prepared to cherish any projects whose realization would injure the purse-proud Meccans: the equality of men, the condemnation of licentious life, the pulling down of the rich, the return to the pure morals of the earlier days of the world, of which the Jews and Christians sang the praises from their Bible: the generous aspirations that have at all epochs constituted the ideal of those whom life has bruised.

These reflections probably alternated with hallucinations, crises of his nervous temperament, crises that are frequent in a debilitating climate, that in the sultry hours of the day afflict the mind with a torpid gloom, a state of half-sleep conducive to dreams and the seeing of visions.

Another idea would be haunting his mind; the Jews, propagating their Messianic traditions, were announcing the coming appearance of a prophet who would re-establish the reign of justice. These traditions had found some credit among the Bedouins, especially at Yathreb, and Mahomet, desirous of playing a rôle, above all desirous of avenging the humiliations he had suffered in times past, was perhaps led in a period of hallucination to believe himself to be this predestined man, this messenger from God.[2]

[1] Weil, "Hist. des Peuples de l'Islam depuis Mahomet."
[2] Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, "Mahomet et le Koran."

One day, on coming out of one of his trances, he told the story of it to Khadija: "I was in a deep sleep when an angel appeared to me; he held in his hand a piece of silken stuff, covered with written characters; he gave it to me saying: 'Read.' I asked him, 'What shall I read?' He wrapped me in the silk and repeated: 'Read.' I repeated my question: 'What shall I read.' He replied: 'In the name of God who has created all things, who has created man of clotted blood, read, by the name of thy Lord who is generous; it is He who has directed the scripture; He has taught man that which he knew not.' I pronounced these words after the angel and he departed. I awoke and went out to walk upon the mountain side; there I heard above my head a voice which said: 'Oh, Mohammed, thou art the man sent by God and I am Gabriel.' I lifted up mine eyes and I saw the angel: I stood motionless, my gaze fixed upon him until he disappeared."

Khadija accepted the new faith; it would have been astonishing if she had not done so; for, according to the manners of the period, a wife could not think differently from her husband: besides, Khadija was fifty-five, and she loved Mahomet.

The second disciple of the new prophet was Zaïd, his slave; but a slave is certainly obliged to obey his master. The third disciple was Ali, the son of Abu-Taleb, a youth of sixteen, of an enthusiastic temperament who later on was to show a pronounced taste for adventure. Ali was the Don Quixote of Islam.

After all, these three conversions were hardly likely to draw the crowd by their example; nevertheless, Mahomet tried to convert his fellow-citizens. His efforts were received with laughter and low jokes, but he was not discouraged. After three

years of determined efforts he had succeeded in gathering round him thirteen followers, of whom all except Ali were persons of no consequence or influential connections. In his desire to play a bold stroke, he gave a banquet to forty notables of the Koreich tribe, and there, with great eloquence, he expounded his doctrine: The worship of idols is only a lie; the coarse images of wood and stone at the Kaaba are nothing but vain simulacra, without consciousness and without power. There is but one God who has created the world and man. He, Mahomet, was the Prophet, the Messenger of this one God. That is the true faith; outside this all is error. Were the men of the Koreich ready to support this doctrine? If they were, their salvation was assured; if not, they would come to make acquaintance with the torments of burning Gehenna.

Ali, alone of all those present, in obedience to his generous temperament, declared himself ready to defend the new belief. The others went into fits of laughter and made sarcastic replies to the summons of which they were the object.

When the affair became known, the Meccans made great fun of these pretensions of the son of Abd'Allah, of this once ragged lad who owed his fortune to his marriage with a decrepit widow, and who wept like a woman at the least provocation. A prophet! this former shepherd! a messenger from God? this coward who had fled from the battle-field! Nonsense! he was overwhelmed with ribbald jeers.[1] They were specially indignant that he should have dared to belittle the idols and to proclaim the existence of another divinity; any such belief would bring ruin on the temple of the Kaaba and compromise the prosperity of the town; to propagate it

[1] Qot'B Eddin Mohammed El-Mekki, "Hist. de la Mecque."

was, therefore, an injury to the community; it was to ignore his sacred obligations to the tribe; to set himself in opposition to established usage; to act the part of an enemy. Their laughter turned to indignation; from laughing at this dreamer they came to look upon him as a traitor. Abu-Taleb, faithful to family clanship, could not forget that this erring soul was of his own blood, and tried by wise counsels to divert him from his ridiculous project; he advised him if he would not give up his ideas, at least to keep them to himself. Mahomet wept, but refused to renounce what he regarded as the true faith. Realizing that he was not making any progress with the Koreich, he addressed himself to the strangers who frequented Mecca. He found complaisant listeners among the men of Yathreb, of whom some even promised him their support, and that for two reasons; first, because the Jewish propaganda had accustomed them to the idea of one God and to the idea of a prophet sent by that God; then and especially, because the new faith vexed the people of Mecca, and struck a blow at the renown of the temple of the Kaaba. Mahomet, hated as he was at Mecca, became a valuable asset for Yathreb.

These negotiations did not escape the notice of the Koreich, but added fuel to their hatred. Mahomet became in their eyes an enemy, a traitor to the most sacred obligations of family solidarity, a renegade who was deserting his tribe to come to terms with their bitterest enemies. The mob rose in riot against this wretch who attempted to interfere with his fellow men in the free enjoyment of their life; their hatred increasing, he was denounced as an enemy of religion, an abominable blasphemer; he was made an outlaw, together with those who shared his views; and, but for the influence of Abu-

Taleb, he would have been killed. He realized the danger and fled. For months he lived out of Mecca, in the caves of Mount Hira, carrying on his propaganda among the caravans who passed within reach.

During this time, Abu-Taleb, who believed his nephew to be out of his mind, made use of his authority to try and appease the anger against him. It was a difficult task; however, in 619, he obtained the removal of the interdict that had been passed upon Mahomet, who was thus at liberty to re-enter Mecca. By the advice of his uncle he was more prudent, but Abu-Taleb died in the same year and Khadija soon afterwards (620). Left thus alone, Mahomet carried on his propaganda; but convinced that he had nothing to expect from the Meccans, he had an interview with the men of Yathreb, who had made overtures to him (621). Lengthy negotiations followed; the Prophet hesitated: to come to an understanding with Yathreb would be in the eyes of Mecca the worst of treasons; the desire of success carried him away, and he finally came to a decision in the course of a meeting that took place on Mount Acaba (622).[1]

The men of Yathreb offered him their support and an asylum in their city, but they added a condition that disclosed their motives: "If he were to be recalled by his fellow-citizens, would Mahomet desert his allies?" "Never!" replied Mahomet, "I will live and die with you. Your blood is my blood; your ruin shall be mine. I am from this moment your friend and the enemy of your foes." This was the form of oath used when a man changed his tribe. Mahomet had just committed the worst of crimes; by uniting himself to the men of Yathreb he had broken

[1] Delaporte, "La Vie de Mahomet," p. 225.

the tie of blood with the Koreich, a sacred bond that the Bedouins scrupulously respect.

When the Meccans learnt of this agreement their fury knew no bounds. This time there was no one to protect Mahomet; Abu-Taleb was dead. They resolved to rid themselves of the traitor. Each of the tribes of Mecca and its allies named a judge: there were forty of them.

Mahomet was not the man to face this danger; he fled with his followers, Zaïd, Ali, Abu-Bekr, his new father-in-law, Othman, his son-in-law, and Omar. This was the Hegira, of date September, 622. From that day, Yathreb became the city of the Prophet, Medinet-el-Nebi, which has been corrupted into Medina. It is with this flight to Medina that Islam commences. If the men of Medina had refused to receive him it would have been all up with the new religion; it would have remained the project of an idle dream. Left to the Meccans who would certainly have put him to death, the Prophet would not have been able to realize his work. Islam, therefore, owes its birth to the hostility between Mecca and Medina. Its first manifestations were acts of hostility against Mecca, and the adhesion of Yathreb to the new faith was inspired by policy rather than religion. Mahomet was received at Medina with sympathy because he was the enemy of Mecca; but, when the first moment of enthusiasm had passed, this population of shopkeepers and husbandmen called upon him to fulfil his promises. In fact, they had done what they thought was a good stroke of business; they were bent on ruining the rival city so that they might come into its prosperity. Mahomet was to carry it out. First of all he built a Mosque; in opposition to the Meccan temple of the Kaaba he built a temple at Medina. Then he had to commence hostilities,

although he was by no means a believer in fighting. In plunging into warlike adventures he obeyed two motives : first, to satisfy the Medinans, and, secondly, to get himself out of a difficult situation.

He was very much discussed. The Meccans not having been able to get rid of him by murder, tried to blacken his character; they had emissaries in Medina itself, charged to undermine his rising influence, to hold him up to ridicule, to show that he was just a man like any other, subject to the same weaknesses, the same passions, and above all, incapable of working miracles.[1] Mahomet was equally opposed by the Jews, who, regarding him as an impostor, refused to accept him as the prophet announced by their scriptures. His enemies pressed him with insidious questions; they called upon him to prove the truth of his mission : if God Almighty was with him, why did He not intervene in his favour?[2] His disciples were equally troublesome; at every moment they asked him for guidance, and he had to have incessantly on his lips verses from his holy book to indicate the rules of conduct according to the new religion. His slightest actions were examined; his public life, commented upon by everyone, must not show any inconsistency. He had also to look after the direction of his most zealous disciples, Ali, Zaïd, Abu-Bekr, Omar and Othman. To escape from these worries, he decided upon action. War satisfied at the same time the lust for booty of those who saw in the affair merely an opportunity for pillage and the generous passion of the true believers, burning to impose their faith on the infidel. Warlike successes were, moreover, the only miraculous proof the Prophet could offer of the divine protection.

[1] Abulfeda, "La Vie de Mahomet."
[2] Sedillot, "Hist. des Arabes."

Such were the conditions under which, after many hesitations, he attacked the Meccans. It was a success: at Beder (624) his followers defeated six hundred Meccans. This victory confirmed his prestige, but it had the drawback of exciting the ardour and ambition of the Medinans. A second affair enabled the Koreich to take their revenge at Mount Ohod.

Mahomet, to please his followers and to satisfy his own resentment, would willingly have continued the struggle against Mecca; he had his own vengeance to wreak upon the insolent Koreich who had mocked him and driven him out, but the reverse at Ohod revealed the danger of any such enterprise. The Meccans were fighting men; the Medinans on the contrary were only shopkeepers and agriculturalists. To carry on hostilities against these powerful enemies was to risk an irreparable check. It was important then in order not to abandon all action, to seek some less redoubtable antagonists, for instance, the Jewish tribes. This explains the successive attacks on the Cainoca, the Lalyan and the Mostelik. There were fine opportunities for looting; the beaten Jews were driven out and their goods were divided among the Bedouins. It might be said that the attraction of loot was the most powerful propaganda for the new religion, and that it brought in more disciples than all the Prophet's harangues.

It was in the exaltation produced by these easy triumphs that Mahomet, playing the bold game, sent threatening messages to Chosroës II., King of Persia, to Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium, to the Negus of Abyssinia and to the Governor of Egypt. In doing this he did not run any great risk, seeing that these sovereigns were not particularly anxious to interfere with a country bare of all resources.

The successes already gained had not only given the Medinans some warlike training, but had had the further effect of grouping around them all the fighting tribes avid for plunder. Mahomet could now contemplate attacking Mecca. His expedition, organized in secret, was perfectly successful. On the 12th of January, 630, Mecca fell into the hands of the Musulmans.[1] On that day the men of Medina had promised themselves to make these haughty merchants pay for their unbearable contempt. "This is the day of slaughter, the day when nothing shall be respected," had said the chief of the Khazradj; but Mahomet removed him from his command, and ordered his generals to observe the greatest moderation. The Meccans witnessed in silence the destruction of the idols in their temple, the true Pantheon of Arabia, which then contained three hundred and sixty divinities worshipped by as many tribes; and, with rage in their hearts, they recognized in Mahomet the messenger from God, whilst inwardly promising themselves to be avenged some day on these rustics, these Jews of Medina who had had the audacity to beat them.[2]

However, as clever men, they knew how to hide their wrath; they essayed to gain the Prophet's confidence, to make him forget the past and to work themselves into all the important posts. It was thus that Abu-Sofian, the indomitable Koreichite, who had led the engagement at Ohod against Mahomet, now made his submission, and gave his son Maowiah to the Prophet as secretary. This example of adroit diplomacy was followed by the majority of the Meccan notables.

Knowing by experience that an open conflict is

[1] Gagnier, "Vie de Mahomet."
[2] Dozy, op. cit. p. 28.

not always the surest way to win, they accommodated themselves to circumstances. But the rivalry between Medina and Mecca was not extinguished. It will be met with again, for it dominates the whole of Musulman history. For his part, Mahomet, wishing to increase the number of his adherents, did not take any unfair advantage of his victory. Contrary to the wishes of the Medinans, he did nothing to impair the religious prestige of his native city. The Kaaba, by a process not unknown elsewhere, became the temple of the one true God.

The taking of Mecca established the success of the Prophet. Those scattered tribes who had remained hostile or indifferent made their submission in the course of the following years. About A.D. 632, almost the whole of Arabia was Musulman, if not at heart, at any rate in outward seeming. To commemorate his triumph by a ceremony that would strike the imagination, Mahomet made a solemn pilgrimage to Mecca, in 632. More than forty thousand Musulmans accompanied him. After the customary devotions—pagan devotions that he took over on account of Islam—he ascended Mount Arafat and harangued the crowd. Summing up the main outlines of the new doctrine, he cried : " O, my God, have I fulfilled my mission? " and every voice answered : " Yes, thou hast fulfilled it." On his return to Medina, he fell into a mortal sickness ; at the mosque he announced his approaching death, and died soon after in the arms of his favourite wife, Aïsha.

It would convey a false idea of Mahomet if he were to be represented as a sort of divine personage, surrounded by an atmosphere of fervour and respectful adoration. To his contemporaries, Mahomet was the leader of a party rather than a religious

personage. He imposed himself by force rather than by persuasion. It is possible that his preaching may have had some effect on the unsophisticated Bedouins, and that it may have seemed to them like an expression of the divine will; but it is quite evident that his immediate entourage did not take his Messianic rôle seriously. There were among his company certain Meccan, sceptics who knew Mahomet's life, his genealogy, his humble and difficult beginnings, his failures, and who saw in him nothing but an upstart favoured by a concatenation of circumstances. Many of these followers, especially those most recently converted, seem to have been actuated by the desire to exploit his influence; but very few of them looked upon him as a prophet. Their scepticism is shown by the attitude of some of them towards him. His secretary, Abd-Allah, who took down the divine revelations from his dictation, did not hesitate to alter their meaning so as to be able to make fun of them amongst his friends. He carried his facetiousness so far that Mahomet was obliged to dismiss him.

It is notorious that one of his favourite wives, Aïsha, deceived him; causing a scandal that the Prophet could only silence by a declaration which he claimed to be inspired by God, but which deceived nobody. We know that in the course of a discussion a certain Okba spat in his face and nearly strangled him. We know also that a Jew of Khaïbar, whom Mahomet was endeavouring to conciliate, tried to poison him. These are sufficient indications to lead us to suppose that the Prophet did not inspire among his contemporaries those sentiments of admiration and respect of which we find the expression in writings subsequent to his decease.

Mysticism only came into Islam later, when the

Arabs, leaving their country, mixed with other nations. The Bedouin had not imagination enough to weave a legend round Mahomet. It was the Islamized foreigners, Syrians, Persians and Egyptians who created this legend and who, passing the history of the Prophet through the mill of their imagination, embellished it to the point of making of it a sort of mystical romance.

CHAPTER V

Mahomet's doctrine—Islam is Christianity adapted to Arab mentality—The practical essentials of Islam—The Koran is the work not of a sectarian but of a politician—Mahomet seeks to recruit his followers by every possible means—He deals tactfully with forces he cannot beat down, and with customs that he cannot abolish—Musulman morality—Fatalism—The essential principles of the reform brought about by the Prophet—Extension to all Musulmans of family solidarity—Prohibition of martyrdom—The Musulman bows to force, but keeps his own ideas—The Koran is animated by the spirit of tolerance, Islam is not; the fault rests with the commentators of the second century, who by stereotyping the doctrine and forbidding all subsequent modification, have rendered all progress impossible.

ISLAM is Christianity adapted to Arab mentality, or, more exactly, it is all that the unimaginative brain of a Bedouin, obstinately faithful to ancestral practices, has been able to assimilate of the Christian doctrines. Lacking the gift of imagination, the Bedouin copies, and in copying he distorts the original. Thus Musulman law is only the Roman Code revised and corrected by Arabs; in the same way Musulman science is nothing but Greek science interpreted by the Arab brain; and again, Musulman architecture is merely a distorted imitation of the Byzantine style.

It may be asked how it was that Christianity, which had its adherents in Arabia, did not develop there as it did elsewhere. First, because the Arabs, protected by their deserts, had never been the objective of propaganda supported by force; also

because its dogmas were too complicated for the Bedouin understanding; and finally, because it refused unswervingly any compromise with traditions, customs or local superstitions: such as polygamy, pilgrimages to the temple of the Kaaba, the sacred month, circumcision, etc. Mahomet simplified Christianity, or rather, for he did not go about it consciously with any preconceived plan, he distorted it without meaning to do so, by interpreting it so far as it was possible for an Arab brain to interpret it. He has borrowed from it all that did not clash with the ideas and customs of the Bedouins: the unity of God, the mission of the Prophet, the immortality of the soul.

The Arabs had long been prepared for the conception of a one and only God, an ancient Sabean belief. It appears, moreover, that the temple of the Kaaba counted among its numerous idols one more powerful or more celebrated than the others—Ilah,[1] which might be compared to the Hebrew Eloah. They were also prepared for the notion of a prophet by the Messianic traditions of the Jews and Christians. As to the idea of the immortality of the soul, the worship of ancestors leads logically to it. Mahomet rejected as abominable errors what he himself could not understand, or what would have been incomprehensible to the Arab brain, or would have clashed with the customs of the Bedouins. The result was a strange medley of beliefs.

The general doctrine of Islam is simple: one supreme God, like that of the Jews and Christians;[2] no Trinity, no Son of God,[3] the place of the Holy Ghost, as intermediary between the Prophet and the

[1] Caussin de Perceval, "Essai sur l'Hist. des Arabes avant l'Islamisme."
[2] Koran, Ch. II, v. 59.
[3] *Ibid.*, Ch. IV, v. 169.

Divinity, is taken by the angel Gabriel. The angels are divine messengers, but they are mortal and will come to life again, like other creatures, at the last day of judgment. The Jews, by denying the heavenly mission of Christ, have incurred the malediction of the Almighty. The Christians have gone astray in inventing dogmas that have not been revealed; but the faithful of both religions can attain salvation, since they admit the two cardinal principles —the unity of God and the last judgment. Jesus Christ is a prophet, but not the son of God; he is the spirit of God, " Rohou Illahi ";[1] he was miraculously conceived by the Virgin Mary.[2] At the end of time he will come down to earth again to exterminate the infidels and to inaugurate the reign of happiness and justice.[3]

After death, punishments or rewards will be allotted to those who have followed or transgressed the divine precepts. The pains of Hell are eternal or not, according to the will of the Almighty. There is a Purgatory.[4] Paradise is reserved for those true believers who have done good and led virtuous lives. Religion alone does not insure salvation, good works are needful,[5] but this point is doubtful.

God rules the world absolutely, and in the humblest details; he has regulated everything in advance, but is able to modify his decisions.[6]

The use of fermented liquors is forbidden, and of certain foods considered injurious to health—dead animals, or those that have not been bled, blood, and the flesh of the pig.[7]

Mahomet did not concern himself specially with

[1] Koran, Ch. II, v. 254.
[2] *Ibid.*, Ch. III, v. 3. and Ch. XIX, v. 20.
[3] *Ibid.*, Ch. IV, v. 157.
[4] *Ibid.*, Ch. LXV, LXVI, LXXVI.
[5] *Ibid.*, Ch. II, v. 23, and Ch. IV, v. 25.
[6] *Ibid.*, Ch. II. IV, X.
[7] *Ibid.*, Ch. V-VI, XVI.

morals; in all circumstances his first care was policy. He was a party leader, struggling to impose his influence; success in his eyes had no other consecration than material supremacy. To arrive at his ends he relied mainly upon force. Those whom he wished to convince he treated with fire and sword. "Believe or die! Believe or be a slave!" was his supreme argument. When he was asked for a miracle to prove that he had divine support, he quoted his success in battle: "*I am the strongest, therefore Allah is with me.*" He is a conqueror, not a moralist. Moses fought against the evil instincts of his people, he branded their vices, he was an austere moral judge. Jesus exhorted men to virtue; he preached the forgiveness of injuries, the love of one's neighbour *whoever he might be*, the horror of violence: "*He who triumphs by the sword shall perish by the sword.*"

Sakya Muni, the Buddha, was a sage who was satisfied with teaching the gentler virtues and giving an example of them in his own life. One and all of these great teachers expected success and the spreading of their doctrines to come only from persuasion; they did not dream of having recourse to force.

Mahomet did not trouble himself with such considerations; he did not combat the evil instincts of his people; he exploited them and from policy he compromised with them. Thus he tolerated polygamy: more than that, he practised it himself. He knew nothing of the *neighbour*, such as Jesus had conceived him. For tribal clanship he substituted Musulman solidarity; the neighbour was exclusively the Musulman, that is to say, his partisan. He recognized slavery, concubinage and the *lex talionis*. The "Believer," as he has defined him, is not a man distinguished by his virtues, but simply one who is

enrolled under the banner of Islam; and Islamism is not in itself a doctrine that aims at the perfection of the individual, but only at the bringing together of those who recognize Mahomet as the Prophet of God.

Gabriel appeared to Mahomet one day under the form of a Bedouin and asked him: "In what does Islam consist?" Mahomet replied, "In professing that there is but one God and that I am his Prophet, in observing exactly the hours of prayer, in giving alms, and in making, if one can, the pilgrimage to Mecca." "It is precisely that," cried Gabriel, revealing himself.

It is in its methods of propaganda that one sees the real spirit of Islam. For example, in Africa, in Uganda, and the Nyanza country, the French "White Fathers" have found themselves in contact with Musulman missionaries. The latter have often been successful because they did their best to deal gently with the evil passions of the negroes; they were willing to tolerate pagan practices, and were satisfied with the mere profession of the Koranic faith. They impressed upon the native chiefs as advantages of their faith that it accepted polygamy, concubinage and slavery.[1] Such expedients show up the real character of a belief.

Entry to the Musulman paradise is not obtained as the reward of a virtuous life; it is enough for the most hardened sinner to pronounce with his dying breath the profession of faith—the *Chahada*—to be admitted to the abode of the elect. As Palgrave has well shown, the formula, "La Ilah, illa Allah: there is no other God but God," does not bear with the Arabs the meaning attributed to it in Europe. This formula is not only the negation of all plurality of

[1] See the biographies of missionaries published by the White Fathers of Maison-Carrée: of Father Auguste Achte, by Father G. Leblond, and of Father Simon Lourdel, by Abbé Nicq.

nature or of person in the Supreme Being, but it also indicates that God is the sole agent, the sole force, the sole action that exists, and that all creatures, matter or spirit, instinct or intelligence, are purely passive; whence the conclusion: all things are as God pleases.

This incommensurable Being, before whom all creatures are reduced to the same level of inertia and passivity, knows no other rule, no other restraint but his sole and absolute will.[1]

We find in the Commentaries of Beydaoui and in the Miskat el Mesabih, a tradition that leaves no doubt as to the conception that Mahomet and his contemporaries formed of the divinity. When Allah resolved to create man, he took into his hands the clay that was to serve in forming humanity, and in which every man pre-existed; dividing it into two equal portions, he threw one into Hell, saying: "Those for everlasting fire"; then, with equal indifference, he threw the other into the sky, adding: "Those for Paradise."

Is there any need to point out the misleading influence of such a doctrine? Acts regarded by man as good or bad become in reality all the same; they have no other value than that attributed to them by the arbitrary will of the Almighty. This is the annihilation of all morality. And as the Musulmans find themselves in that half of the Creator's clay destined for the delights of Paradise, it makes little or no difference whether they are good or bad: it is enough for them if they practise the outward observances that distinguish a good Musulman from the unbeliever.

The outward worship comprised five essential practices:

[1] Palgrave, "A Year in Central Arabia."

First, prayer, five times a day, preceded each time by an ablution.[1] This was a practice borrowed from the Sabeans. Note that, with the Musulmans, prayer is rather an act of adoration and of devotion than a request addressed to the Almighty, Who knows our legitimate needs without our pointing them out to Him.

Second, fasting during the sacred month of Rhamadan; this again is a Sabean custom.[2]

Third, giving alms, which consists in giving to the poor the tenth part of one's income.[3] This almsgiving, or Zekkat, is levied by the Government, acting on the principle that this institution having in view the general utility, it behoves the Government, as representing the community, to regulate the use to which it is put.[4]

Fourth, the pilgrimage to Mecca, a custom of the idolatrous tribes.[5]

Fifth, the Holy War, or religious propaganda (Djihad). The Djihad is a duty; the world being divided into two parts, Musulmans and non-Musulmans, the Dar el Islam, or land of Islam, and the Dar el Harb, or land of war. "Complete my work," said the Prophet, "extend the house of Islam to all parts. The house of war is God's, God gives it to you. *Fight the infidels until there shall be none left.*"

It follows from this precept that war is the normal state of Islam. The orthodox interpreters have, moreover, settled this point with particular care: The true believer must never cease to fight those who do not think as he does, except when he is not the stronger party. "*There can be no peace with the*

[1] Koran, Ch. II, IV, XX.
[2] *Ibid.*, Ch. II.
[3] *Ibid.*, Ch. II.
[4] Pellissier de Reynaud, "Les Annales Algériennes," t. iii., p. 483.
[5] Koran, Ch. II, XLII.

infidel, but, when the Musulmans are not in sufficient force, there is no harm in their giving up the Djihad for a certain time."

This last recommendation explains the attitude of Moslems temporarily subject to a foreign power. Reduced to impotency, they conceal their impatience whilst they are waiting for the advent of "Moul-es-Sââ," the Master of the hour, the man of genius who will be able, with divine protection, to bring together all the forces of Islam for the deliverance of the believers from the unbelievers' yoke.

This mixture of pagan customs, Sabean practices, and doctrines borrowed from Christianity shows the eclectic character of Islam, or rather of the Koran; for it is desirable to establish a distinction between the Koran and Islam. The Koran is animated by a certain spirit of tolerance; Islam, on the contrary, has become an intolerant religion that admits no idea from the outer world, not even such as are outside the purely denominational sphere.

The Koran is not the work of a sectarian blinded by narrow prejudice; it is the work of a politician anxious to draw to himself by all possible means the greatest number of adherents. According to the circumstances, Mahomet flatters, promises or threatens; but the flattery and the promises are more frequent than the threats.

The reason is obvious: he is striving to establish his doctrine; he therefore does his best to make it seductive by accepting now the prejudices of one party, and now the customs of another. He makes no frontal attacks upon received ideas or inveterate habits; he includes them bodily in his doctrine, softening them down when they do not please him. In the same way he does not fight openly powers too firmly established; he compromises with some of

them and gives way to others, ready to stand up to them when circumstances permit.

It was thus that he handled the Christians, the Jews, and the Sabeans because they were numerous in Arabia. "The Christians," he says, "will be judged by their Gospels; those who judged them otherwise would be prevaricators. . . . Only enter into discussion with Jews and Christians in sincere and moderate terms . . . of a truth Musulmans, Jews, Christians, and Sabeans, all those who believe in God and in the last judgment and who do good will be rewarded at His hands; they will be exempt from fear and from punishment."[1] Later on he attacks them, but with prudence.

In the same way, he seeks to make himself the champion of women, of whom he speaks always with benevolence, and whose position he tried to ameliorate.[2] Before his reform, women and children could not inherit; and, what was even worse, the nearest relation of the defunct took possession of his women and their property, in the same way as he took over his slaves together with their savings. Mahomet gave women the right to inherit and often insisted in their favour. His last sermon at Mecca contained these memorable words: "Treat your wives well; they are your helpers and can do nothing by themselves." He well knew that if a woman is a slave by day, by night she is a queen, and her influence is at all times worthy of consideration.

He also tried to win over the slaves by making their enfranchisement easier and by recommending it as a meritorious action. He laid down that a slave who conceives to her master thereby acquires her freedom, and that the son of a slave by a freeman is free.

[1] Koran, Ch. II, IV, V, VII.
[2] *Ibid.*, Ch. IV.

If we would explain the attitude of the Prophet by an illustration taken from modern life, we could find no better comparison than to a parliamentary candidate during his electoral campaign. Like him, Mahomet does not trouble about the quality of his supporters, but their number; and to secure their votes he is ready to make any concessions; he shuts his eyes to divergences of opinion, and moderates his requirements.

So, in order not to clash with Arab customs, he accepts polygamy, but he tempers it by limiting the number of wives to four, and by improving the position of the wife and of the children. In the same way he accepts circumcision, slavery, the sacred month of fasting, the pilgrimage to Mecca, the worship paid to the stone at the Kaaba, all of them rites of Arab paganism.

The same desire to please is found in the picture he paints of the paradise promised to the elect;[1] it is such an ideal as a Bedouin would form in his mind: shade, cool springs, charming women who do not grow old; it is a catalogue of what the nomad finds in an oasis on returning from his wanderings in the desert. The singing-girls do not grow old, or at least one does not see them aging, because they abandon their profession as soon as age renders them less desirable.

As an able politician, Mahomet handles all with tact and tries to please everybody. He only imposes one condition: acceptance of Islam and the recognition of his divine mission.[2] The majority of his personal conceptions, those that he seems to have evolved from his inner consciousness, are inspired by this desire of recruiting followers, and, above all, of

[1] Koran, Ch. LXIX, LXXV.
[2] Caussin de Perceval, op. cit.

keeping them in the Musulman faith and preventing them from forsaking it. There are two of these conceptions that dominate all Islam and which have exercised considerable influence over Musulman peoples. The first is the extension to all true believers of the spirit of solidarity which animates the members of the same tribe. Among the Bedouins the social horizon stops at the tribe; his neighbour is a man of the same tribe, a relation, a cousin in some degree. Outside the tribe he has no neighbour, and therefore no social obligations. In proclaiming the brotherhood of all his adherents, Mahomet succeeded in making of Islam a closely united family, and of creating between the individual members sentiments of clanship of which we can observe the power at the present day. The tribe, it is true, did not always forget their ancient rivalries, especially during the first centuries of Islam; and Moslem history abounds in incidents provoked by family antagonism; but, with time, hatreds and misunderstandings were toned down, and if at certain periods of the splendour of the Empire of the Caliphs the tribes, having no outside enemy to combat, gave free rein to their independent spirit, it is no less true that, as soon as Islam was menaced, they remembered their religious brotherhood and formed a united front against the common enemy. And we see how at the present time every blow struck against the freedom of any Musulman people sends a tremor at once through the whole of Islam.

This solidarity was a great attraction for the conquered nations, and it was the desire to profit by it that brought over most of the recruits to Islam.[1] Every convert at once enjoyed all the privileges of

[1] De Castries, "L'Islam," p. 85; Seignette, "Introd. à la trad. de Khalil."

a Musulman: a foreigner and an enemy the day before, he became by simple conversion an equal and a brother. "Know," said Mahomet, in his last sermon at Mecca, "know that you are all equal among yourselves, and that you form a family of brothers." This spirit of solidarity is kept up by the custom of the pilgrimage to Mecca. The peremptory duty imposed upon the Believer to visit the Holy City at least once in his life has contributed in the greatest measure to maintain the unity of belief throughout Islam, as well as the sentiment of religious brotherhood. Every year, around the temple of the Kaaba, representatives of every portion of the Musulman world, from India to Morocco, meet, mix together, live in intimate association, performing side by side the same rites, the same practices, and communicating in the same ideal. All divergence of opinion, all nascent heresy, are immediately swept away by the great breath of unity that passes over these people prostrate in adoration of the same idea. No other religion offers anything comparable to this pilgrimage to the city which is, according to the Arab expression, the "*Navel of the Islamic faith.*"

The second original conception of the Prophet is his prohibition of martyrdom. He frequently insists upon this point: the Musulman should not suffer for his beliefs. If he is the stronger, he ought to impose them, but if he finds himself too weak to resist with any prospect of success, he must submit *for the time being* to every foreign law that is forced upon him by violence. According to a fundamental precept of Islamic law, *the dogma of constraint*, his powerlessness takes from his conduct all blameable character.[1] For him to obey a non-Musulman

[1] Sawas Pasha, "Etudes sur la théorie du Droit Musulman"; Snouck Hurgronje, "Le Droit Musulman."

power, or even one hostile to Islam, is not to abjure his religion, but simply to avoid useless suffering. He makes a semblance of yielding, but preserves intact in his heart his faith and his ideas. Whatever his attitude, the Musulman never ceases to be a Musulman; but as soon as the power that renders the constraint effective ceases, he must immediately throw off the law imposed upon him, under penalty of incurring eternal punishment.

By the *dogma of constraint*, the Musulman is protected from all violence. Whatever the circumstances and the vicissitudes, his conscience remains intact. Under the threat of force he can bind himself by the most solemn oaths, but they are mere empty words. This is an example of the theory of the "scrap of paper" that the Germans have made famous. The merit of martyrdom disappears, but abjuration becomes impossible.[1] The result is that the brain of the true believer is unassailable, impenetrable, irremediably closed to outside ideas; and it is this that explains why for centuries past the Musulmans have not made any concession to progress, and have abandoned none of their beliefs. It is this that explains also the return to ancestral practices of so many of the French Algerian subjects, officers or officials, who, after a career loyally accomplished, to all appearance, under foreign rule, go back, when circumstances permit, to their old habits. They have been able to live in our midst and to give the illusion that they have adopted our manners and our conceptions, without being in the very least affected by our ideas. In spite of outward concessions to the manners of the time, they preserve intact their robust faith that admits neither compromise nor

[1] De Castries, "L'Islam," p. 211.

argument, and naïvely delights in its "*credo quia absurdum.*"[1]

Mahomet certainly never anticipated an intransigence carried to this extreme, as he himself never scrupled to borrow from other religions whatever he thought would be useful. How then, has Islam, contrary to the spirit of the Koran, become intolerant? The answer is that the Koran no longer influences individuals; it is no longer the Koran that directs and regulates the conduct of the faithful. The Koran is not, as is generally believed, the civil and religious code of the Musulmans. It contains potentially the whole of Islamic legislation; it constitutes a sort of quintessence of the laws, but it cannot replace them. It is the law of the Musulmans, just as the Pentateuch is the law of the Jews, and the Gospel that of the Christians. The same causes have produced the same effects in the three religions. In the early centuries of the Church, the Christian councils forbade the interpretation of the Gospels and substituted for them as a code *the body of the canon law;* in the same way the Jews substituted the *Talmud* for the Pentateuch; so the Caliphs, the successors of Mahomet, in accordance with the doctors of the Faith, forbade all exposition of the Koran outside of the four orthodox commentaries, which from that time down to the present have formed the *Corpus Juris* of Musulman nations. This *body of law,* sanctioned by the unanimous accordance of peoples and princes, is *the law*, of divine authority, according to their belief, like the Koran of which it is the expansion.

This work was accomplished in the second century of the Hegira, at a period when Islam, triumphant and commanding irresistible material force, had no

[1] Louis Rinn, "Marabouts et Khouan."

longer any need to use tact in dealing with authority; but dictated its will and pleasure to all nations, and enforced them by violence. The leaders of the Musulman armies confronted the infidel with this formula: "Abjure or die; abjure or be a slave." Thus, to gain a knowledge of the real doctrine of Islam, of that which has influenced the Moslem nations, recourse must be had not to the Koran but to the interpretations of the Koran made by learned doctors of the Faith. They have fixed the doctrine and have rendered it definitive, unchangeable and in consequence imperfectible. And as among the Musulmans it is the law of religious inspiration that regulates every act, it has been impossible for them to accept any progress, even in matters that do not affect the Faith, as for example matters of an economic or scientific nature.

The spirit of the orthodox interpreters of the Koran is utterly different from that of Mahomet. The Prophet's intention was to appropriate from other nations everything that seemed capable of strengthening his doctrine and attracting disciples. It was a liberal conception that might have made Islam the universal religion. Unfortunately, the doctors of the Faith have made any accommodation or any addition impossible. By their action a blind fanaticism has replaced the liberal spirit of the Koran, and has killed any germ of progress in Islam. The immutability of its institutions has ended in moulding individuals and the whole nation. It is this that explains how the Moslem nations have remained and still remain insensible and even hostile to Western civilization.

The *Believer* cannot accept, without abjuring, any truth of whatever nature if it is not Islamized, that is to say, unless it is proved to him that it is supported

by one of the sacred foundations laid by God and his Prophet. But it is not permissible for anyone in Islam to establish this proof; it is, therefore, impossible to introduce into the Law, and consequently into society, the modifications dictated by the evolution of ideas and the progress of science.

To understand this "immobilization" of the Moslem nations one would have to imagine what the Christian world would have become if, no distinction having been established between the spiritual and the temporal, it had remained under the discipline of the canon law of the earlier centuries. The autonomy accorded to each of these two powers has allowed the temporal to develop in accordance with the progress of the times, without having to rebel against the spiritual. Among Moslems this distinction does not exist; the religious law is at the same time the civil law, God is the legislator; every act of a Believer, whatever it may be, depends upon His will, and is submitted to His judgment. This conception has made of Islam a society under theocratic government, like the vanished societies of Egypt and the Orient; and it is abundantly clear that any such society, obstinately hostile to all evolution, i.e., to all progress, can only stagnate outside the civilizing currents that are bearing humanity towards the future. To rise out of its immobility it would have to deny its faith; but no Musulman in any part of the world has ever thought of such a thing without horror.

Islam stands in this modern world like a mournful statue of the past.

CHAPTER VI

Islam under the successors of Mahomet—Even in Arabia the new faith was only able to impose itself by force—The first Musulman conquerors were actuated by the desire for plunder, not by any anxiety to proselytize—The expansion of Islam in Persia, Syria and Egypt was favoured by the hostility of the natives of those countries to the Persian and Byzantine Governments—The struggle for influence between Mecca and Medina, which had contributed to Mahomet's success, was continued under his successors, sometimes favourable to Medina, under the Caliphates of Abu-Bekr Omar and Ali; sometimes to Mecca, under the Caliphate of Othman—The Mecca party finally triumph with the coming of Maowiah—Conflicts between the tribes, between individuals, chronic anarchy : characteristics of Musulman society and the causes of its future ruin.

THE work of Mahomet, too rapidly accomplished, rested upon slender foundations. One cannot profoundly modify the mentality of a people in twenty years, to the extent of extirpating from their brains all germs of former beliefs. To attain such a result, it would be necessary to act upon several successive generations, and the Prophet died before the generation he had conquered for Islam had been replaced by its successor. "Conquered" is the right word; since it was mainly by force that he had imposed his doctrine, and by ministering to the Bedouin's love of plunder. Every recalcitrant tribe was immediately attacked and its goods confiscated; yielding to violence and accepting the new faith, it was in turn

won over by the lure of booty, and joined up with the other Musulmans to attack and pillage the next one.

It was in this manner that Islam spread rapidly over the whole of Arabia; but this method of expansion had its special danger. When there were no more infidels to be robbed, how were the bellicose instincts of the new believers to be satisfied? Without the attraction of booty, which in their eyes constituted the chief merit of Islam and their reason for remaining faithful to a cause which procured them numerous material satisfactions, would they not abandon it, would they not forsake the Musulman fraternity to return to their old inter-tribal quarrels?

Mahomet had thought of all this, and of starting the Bedouins upon the conquest of Syria; but illness had compelled him to delay the execution of this project until death prevented him from undertaking it.

This combination of circumstances was very nearly fatal to the new religion. Cowed by force, possibly also influenced by the moral ascendancy of the Prophet, and by the prestige that an uninterrupted series of successes had given him, the tribes had remained faithful because they feared him; but, as soon as his illness became known, the more turbulent among them rose. Before his death, Mahomet learned that in the Yemen a certain Aihala-the-black, who combined the possession of immense wealth with an alluring eloquence, was claiming to be the bearer of a divine message, had driven out the Musulman Sheikhs, and had taken several towns.[1]

The Prophet's death was the signal for a general rising.[2] The old rivalry between Mecca and Medina broke out afresh; the importance that had accrued

[1] Al Soheili.
[2] Syl. de Sacy, "Vie de Mahomet."

to Medina did not suit the pride and ambition of the Meccans. The latter, and the tribes who were allied with them, could only bear with simmering impatience the yoke of the shopkeepers of Medina, whom they despised, and who, moreover, made themselves unbearable by their religious bigotry.

Incited by ambition, false messengers from God were arising on all sides and drawing in their train the tribes hungering for pillage. Musulman Sheikhs, refugees, "Defenders" and "Ansars," driven out by the insurgents, were arriving at Medina every day.

The number of false prophets and the success of some of them show what a favourable soil Arab anarchy offered to impostors; they also explain how Mahomet had been able to conceive and carry into effect his own project.

Starting from the most distant regions, the revolt drew nearer and nearer, until the city of the Prophet was in danger.[1] It was a critical moment. In omitting to nominate his successor, Mahomet had left the field clear for every ambition. The Meccans were in a turmoil, intending to seize the power that the Medinans were just as determined to retain.

The man to whom all indications naturally pointed was his cousin and son-in-law Ali, one of his first converts. But Ali had a deadly enemy in his own family, Aïsha, the favourite wife of Mahomet, who had never forgiven Ali for having once cast doubt upon her conjugal fidelity.[2] Her resentment was aggravated by feminine rivalry between herself and Fatima, Ali's wife, and the daughter of the Messenger of God. In short, Aïsha was dead against Ali and intrigued against him with such

[1] Dozy, op. cit. p. 81.
[2] Koran, Ch. XXIV; see note by Kasimirsky in his translation, p 280.

energy as to cause his rejection. Then, winning over to her party the companions of Mahomet, those who had followed him in his flight from Mecca to Medina, and had shared his good and evil fortunes, she got them to accept her father, Abu-Bekr. The companions resigned themselves to this choice on the instance of Omar, because it was necessary to come to an immediate decision in order to put a stop to Meccan ambitions.

So Abu-Bekr was proclaimed Caliph. He was a man of simple manners, who, in spite of his unexpected elevation, lived in poverty. When he died, he left behind him a worn-out garment, one slave and one camel. A true patriarch, after the Medinans' own heart; he had one great quality—energy; and he possessed what had given victory to Mahomet and was lacking to his enemies—an unshakable conviction, a bigoted faith.[1] He was the right man in the right place.

This old man, of good-natured aspect, took his stand in the midst of general insurrection, and with the implacable firmness of a believer began Mahomet's work over again. He knew what men to select as his assistants, notably, one Khalid, a fighting Sheikh of wild character, of cold-blooded, calculating cruelty, whose mere name struck terror. His orders from the Caliph were brief and to the point: "Destroy the apostates without pity by fire and sword, by every sort of torture." Khalid obeyed to the letter: there were tremendous hecatombs in the Nejed and in the Yemen. The insurgents, decimated, hunted and surrounded, were slaughtered by thousands, their goods pillaged or destroyed.[2] Other Sheikhs, worthy rivals of Khalid, accomplished the same task in the

[1] Tabari, "Annales musulmanes."
[2] Al Beidawi and Abulfeda, "Vie de Mahomet."

central and southern regions, and in a few months order was re-established.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that Islam made its way into men's minds by the attractiveness of its doctrine. Even in Arabia, Mahomet's own country, it could only gain recruits by violence, and it was the same elsewhere. In all countries, nations in subjection to an alien Power, as in Egypt, North Africa and Spain, anxious to change masters in the hope of bettering their condition, received Islam at first as an instrument of liberation;[1] but as soon as their first experiences had revealed to them the intolerable tyranny of a bigoted religion, they revolted. But it was then too late. Islam, with irresistible material force at its disposal, broke down all opposition and drowned all inclination to rebel in a sea of blood. And then, generations passed away; the new generations, brought up in the Musulman faith, enclosed in its narrow dogmas, became fixed in resignation and no longer dreamed of changing either their beliefs or their masters.

The massacres perpetrated in Arabia under the orders of Abu-Bekr compelled the tribes to re-enter the narrow way, not because they were convinced of the truth of Islam, but because they were satisfied that for them the new religion had, in default of any divine right, a tremendous argument of physical force. The insurgents resigned themselves therefore to being Musulmans, but their orthodoxy was more than doubtful. If apostasy was not to be thought of because of the implacable severity of its punishment, these converts by force had neither piety nor sincere faith. Men who considered vengeance as the most sacred of all duties, could not be expected to show any great respect for a religion that had cost them

[1] Ch. Mills. "Hist. du Mahométisme."

the lives of so many of their kindred.[1] They were ignorant of its most elementary principles. Arab writers have given us some typical examples of this ignorance that throw a curious light upon the morals of the early Moslems. An old Bedouin had arranged with a young man to let him have his wife every other night, and, in return, the young man was to watch the old man's flock. This curious arrangement came to the ears of the Caliph, who ordered the two men to appear before him, and asked them if they were aware that their religion forbade a man to share his wife with anyone else. They swore they had no idea of it.

Another man had married two sisters: "Don't you know," asked the Caliph, "that religion forbids what you have done?"

"No," replied the offender, "I hadn't the least idea of it, and I must say I can't see anything wrong in the act you are finding fault with."

"The text of the law is quite clear, nevertheless. You will at once repudiate one of the two sisters, or I shall cut your head off."

"Are you speaking seriously?"

"Very seriously."

"Oh, well, it's a detestable religion that won't let you do such things."[2]

The unfortunate man never even suspected, so great was his ignorance, that in answering in such a fashion he was running the risk of being beheaded as a blasphemer or an apostate.

Abu-Bekr had no illusions as to the quality of the new converts, nor as to their real sentiments. And, realizing that it was expedient to give them some opportunity of pillage, he enrolled them forthwith

[1] Dozy, pp. 36, 37.
[2] Abu-Ismail Al Baqri. "Fotouh ech-Cham."

in the Musulman armies he was sending into Syria and Irak. He thus rid himself of a lot of troublesome people, whilst making them serve the cause of Islam.[1]

We generally form a false conception of the Musulman armies; they were more of the nature of hordes than of regularly ordered troops; there was no organization and no discipline or cohesion. The tribes formed so many separate corps, each under its own standard carried by the Sheikh or by a warrior appointed by him. The whole presented a spectacle of inconceivable disorder—horse and foot all mixed up together, some half clothed, others loaded up with stolen garments; each man armed according to his own fancy with a bow or a pike, a mace, a sword, or a spear. The women followed up the fighting men to take part in the sack and guard the booty.[2] These hordes have often been represented as dominated by a superhuman faith and courting death with a sort of fanatical joy, in the hope of gaining paradise. This is a mistake: with the exception of some few companions of Mahomet who, as it were, formed the Staff, and who were animated by sincere convictions, the mob of fighting men had but one idea—loot. It was this that made them successful. These starving Bedouins rushed like beasts of prey on the rich provinces offered to their rapacity. Without any sort of organized commissariat, they could only live on the conquered people; to live they must first conquer. Victory to them meant not only loot, it gave them all the material enjoyments they could wish for—food, women and slaves.

The desert men, accustomed to the hardest

[1] Noël Desvergers, "Hist. de l'Arabie."
[2] Ockley, "Hist. des Sarrazins," p. 253; Sedillot, "Hist. des Arabes."

privations and to the modest profits to be had from robbing caravans, became enthusiastic followers of Islam when once they knew the intoxicating delights of devastated provinces, cities put to sack, women ravished; but religious faith had no part in this enthusiasm.

Such were the hordes that rushed to the conquest of the world.

Under the command of the terrible Khalid, they first attacked Irak, which was then under the rule of the Persian Sassanides.[1] Irak-el-Arabi comprises the valley of the lower Tigris and Euphrates, a flat, fertile alluvial plain, which the moisture of the soil and the mildness of the climate made a regular oasis. The population, peaceable and hard-working, lived entirely by agriculture: a people of husbandmen and gardeners, who had carried the science of irrigation very far.[2]

The richness of this territory had from all time excited the envy of its neighbours; of the hordes of Turkestan, on the north and east, of Byzantine Emperors on the west. The Bedouins hurled themselves upon it like a herd of famished beasts. The orchards of fruit trees, the verdant gardens intersected by irrigation channels, amid thriving villages, all seemed to them like a paradise.[3]

The inhabitants made a fierce resistance; they held to their property and their religion—Mazdeism or Zoroastrianism, a lofty belief that conceived the world as in prey to two powers in eternal conflict—good and evil. But Khalid employed such "frightfulness" against those who held out that the population, terrorized by the spectacle of burnings,

[1] Th. Nooldeke, "Hist. des Perses et des Arabes au temps des Sassanides."
[2] El Macin.
[3] Kremer, "Hist. du Khalifat."

rape and murder, resigned themselves to conform to Islam, and thereby saved their property.[1]

As soon as Irak was quiet, Khalid turned upon Syria, where Mothana was already operating. The Byzantines who ruled the country, intoxicated by recent successes gained over the Persians, devoted themselves to the pleasures of life; and, to fill up their time as gentlemen of leisure, gave themselves up to philosophical and religious discussions: vain subtleties of a barren casuistry with which their name is for ever connected. Verbal strife was then very keen between the different Christian sects—the monophysites, the catholics and monothelites, to name only the principal ones.[2]

The Emperor Heraclius, who had a passion for these doctrinal futilities, troubled himself but little about the Musulmans; when he heard of their advance, he contented himself with sending a reinforcement of five thousand men to Antioch.[3] He estimated that this would be enough against a ragged horde without discipline; but he forgot that the contest between these ragamuffins and his Greek soldiers was unequal. The former, famished and possessing nothing, were fighting to live, to seize by violence all that they lacked; whereas his Greeks, well endowed with worldly goods, and fond of life, lost everything in losing their lives; so they fought cannily.

The Bedouins, avid for plunder, excited by the promises of their leaders, who extolled the delights and the wealth of Syria, overpowered the Greeks. Possibly they were helped by dissensions among the Christians, and it is probable that, in the blindness

[1] Dozy, "Essai sur l'Hist. de l'Islamisme."
[2] Lebeau, "Hist. du Bas-Empire."
[3] Ockley, "Conquête de la Syrie, de la Perse et de l'Egypte par les Sarrazins."

have been dangerous to persecute, since it prescribes martyrdom, he took guarantees for the future. Christian parents were free to practise their religion, but the education of their children was taken out of their hands. Arabic became the official language; all posts, all favours and privileges were granted exclusively to Musulmans; so that people were led imperceptibly to renounce their beliefs.[1] This régime of favour limited to Musulmans upset Syrian society. The humble and the outcast made haste to adopt the new religion; because, becoming as it were overnight the equals of the conqueror, they passed from the condition of servants to that of masters. Owing to this turn of the wheel of fortune, it was *the Syrian proletariat*, to borrow a modern expression, who administered the country, under Arab overlordship; whilst the well-to-do classes, restrained by considerations of self-respect and refusing to make terms with the conqueror, were suddenly impoverished by the loss of their privileges.

Syria, pacified and subjected to tribute, escaped further pillage. This was not to the liking of the Bedouins, whose sole preoccupation was loot; Omar therefore sent them to Egypt under Amru (639).

Egypt, under the rule of the Greeks, was at that time profoundly divided, first by race antagonism between the Greek conquerors and the natives of the country, and then by religious quarrels. The Egyptians had adopted Christianity; but, in this Alexandrine centre, where so many new ideas had fermented on the decline of paganism, the Christian doctrines had not been able to preserve their primitive purity. A whole literature had been developed to satisfy the tendencies of Egyptian mentality: apocryphal Acts of the Apostles; Revelations of Elias, and

[1] Al Wakedi.

of Sophonius, etc.; finally, the Christians, hesitating amid a hundred heresies, had adopted the monophysite doctrine of Eutyches, condemned in 415 by the Council of Chalcedony. They formed under the Patriarch of Alexandria, a church independent of the papacy.[1] Persecuted for their ideas by the orthodox Emperors of Constantinople, and burdened by vexatious taxation, they received the Musulmans as liberators. Thus betrayed, and drowned in a hostile population, the Greeks were beaten at the first encounter. Some cities held out, but they were compelled to surrender through the treachery of the Christians, the *Copts*, as the Arabs called them. By 641 the whole country was in the hands of the invaders.

The Copts were rewarded for their treachery; they first obtained numerous privileges and were authorized to practice their religion in consideration of the payment of an annual tribute of two ducats a head. In the first year, 640, this yielded twelve million ducats; a considerable sum for that period.[2] Encouraged by this result, Omar extended the tax to all the inhabitants, and then proceeded to tax the landed proprietors according to the value of their estates.

As the Copts, by their knowledge of the language and customs of the country, were the only people capable of replacing the Greek officials in the conduct of a complicated administration, it was they who filled the various posts and who especially collected the taxes. They grew rich at this trade; all the money of the country passed through their hands, and some of it stayed there. Their prosperity was their undoing. A century later, as the result of a change

[1] Theophanus, Chron.
[2] Al Wakedi.

of religious passions let loose, certain sectaries, to get rid of their adversaries, favoured the Musulman inrush. It was proved that Romanus, Governor of Bosra, betrayed his own people and sold himself to the invaders.

Syria was abominably pillaged. For the first time the Musulmans were fighting a Christian community, and one would have expected, on the faith of the Koran, that they would have shown some moderation towards those whom the Prophet had called "people of the Book," and whom he had on several occasions enjoined them to treat with consideration.

Far from it: the Christians were treated as idolaters and apostates, "with fire and sword and all manner of tortures," according to the letter of Abu-Bekr's barbarous order. And this proves that Islam, a doctrine conceived in a barbarian brain for a nation of barbarians, only enjoins moderation when under restraint; but that, whenever possible, it resorts to violence in every form.

In Syria, as in Irak, massacres alternated with burnings. The citizens of Damascus who, after a furious resistance, had been authorized by a solemn treaty to leave the country and to carry with them part of their belongings, were treacherously attacked as soon as they had got into open country, and were robbed and massacred.[1] It was a singular method of propaganda, but the Bedouins cared little about gaining recruits for Islam, and their leaders had not desired them to proselytize; booty was the only thing that mattered.

Abu-Bekr died with the satisfaction of having pacified Arabia in two years, and won two important provinces for Islam. To avoid fresh troubles, he had

[1] Sédillot, op. cit. p. 135.

before his death nominated as his successor Omar, who had been one of his staunchest supporters at the time of his elevation to the Caliphate. The election of Omar (634-644), a refugee from Mecca at the time of the Prophet's flight, was another triumph for the Medina party,[1] and greatly exasperated the Meccans. Omar achieved the conquest of Syria and added to it that of Palestine. The Bedouins found themselves all at once in the midst of a refined people, who had inherited the rich treasures of Hellenic culture; and these undisciplined hordes, without laws and without social organization, must have been greatly astonished by the spectacle of a regularly constituted society, in which individuals, each forming part of the machinery of a wisely ordered administration, could not perform the simplest acts without having to conform to rules laid down.

Omar was inspired by this organization to establish the first foundations of Musulman government, of that Caliphate government that was destined to rule so many nations later on. An able administrator, he conceived the idea of turning the Musulman victories into money; he regulated the pillage, and made the vanquished pay indemnities. Thus Jerusalem, by the payment of an annual tribute, purchased the right to preserve its churches and to practise its own religion. The citizens of Aleppo escaped massacre by paying three hundred thousand pieces of gold;[2] and other cities bought themselves off in the same way. In this wise measure of Omar is to be found the origin of the Caliphate treasure, which was to attain such fabulous proportions under the Ommeyads and Abbassides. But if Omar respected for the moment —and from financial considerations—a faith it would

[1] Es-Soyouty, "Hist. des Khalifes."
[2] Ch. Mills, "Hist. du Mahométisme."

of Musulman policy towards foreigners, we see the Copts, whose property had aroused envy, abominably robbed and treated as pariahs. It went to the length of their being compelled to wear blue turbans to distinguish them from Musulmans, and of their priests being branded with a red-hot iron. Later still, when religious fanaticism had increased, they were reduced to such a pitiful condition that the greater part of them had to abandon their faith.

At the same time as he was carrying on the conquest of Syria and Egypt, Omar continued that of Persia, rendered more feasible by the previous occupation of Irak under Caliph Abu-Bekr. At the outset, the Persians resisted, with varying fortune; they were finally beaten at Cadesia (634), where Roustem, their national hero, perished, and at Djalulah and Nehavend, where their king Iez-Dedjerd was forced to take flight.[1] The Musulmans took possession one after the other of Assyria, Media, Suziana, Perside and the Persian provinces placed under the authority of China. The loot was immense; after the battle of Cadesia alone each horseman received the value of six thousand dirhems, and each foot soldier two thousand dirhems.[2]

Islam now ruled over vast territories, but its influence was far from having penetrated the manners of the people. Even in Arabia, with the exception of Medina where a sort of mystic puritanism reigned, its dogmas were little observed, and, for the matter of that, were unknown to the majority of the Bedouins. The Meccans, impatient of the yoke of Medina, and exasperated by the triumph of their rivals, set the example of insubordination. They violated the precepts of the Prophet for the sheer

[1] Malcolm, "Hist. de la Perse."
[2] Sedillot, "Hist. des Arabes."

pleasure of disobedience, from the spirit of opposition. Accustomed to the enjoyments wealth provides, their minds enlarged by foreign travel, it was repugnant to them to have to bow to the mummeries of the ragged bigots of Medina; but, too cunning to engage in any open conflict against the doctrines of Mahomet, they were satisfied with merely not observing them. Thus, they drank wine, they had wives in excess of the number permitted, they neglected the fasts and gave themselves up to gambling;[1] and yet, in spite of their contempt for the men of Medina, they humoured them, waiting for an opportunity of taking their revenge. They intrigued to obtain all the important appointments. It was in this way that Maowiah, son of Abu-Sofian, who had been secretary to the Prophet, managed to get himself appointed Governor of Syria. Omar was glad enough to be rid of an influential and troublesome member of the Koreich party, of a "black sheep," notorious for his disorderly life and perfect contempt of all religious laws.

In Syria Maowiah assumed the style of a *grand seigneur.* Fascinated by the manners of the inhabitants, who had acquired by contact with Byzantine civilization a love of pleasure and a science of luxury and well-being undreamed of in Arabia, he forgot all about Islam, the Prophet and the Caliph. In the wealthy society of Damascus, where all the subtleties of philosophy, all the refinements of Greco-Latin decadence were known, nobody cared anything about religion or morals; in view of the uncertainty of the future, they made haste to enjoy the present, without stopping at vain scruples. Maowiah lived in a beautiful dream; he wrote his enthusiasm to his friends at Mecca and drew for them so attractive a

[1] Qot' Beddin Mohammed El Mekki, "Hist. de la Mekke."

picture of the country and of the life he was leading, he promised them such lucrative posts that the greater part of them hurried out to join him, glad to get away from the yoke of Medina, from their bigoted fanaticism and stinginess.

The *noblesse* of Mecca emigrated to Syria.[1] Maowiah thus surrounded himself with an elegant and refined court, which very soon acquired Byzantine manners and formed a striking contrast to the puritan society of the Old Musulmans of Medina.

Those of the Koreich who stayed behind in Mecca continued their sullen opposition, causing Omar some uneasiness. He foresaw the difficulties that ambition would raise in the near future, when he would have to name his successor. So, when he was stabbed by a Ghebr in the mosque at Medina and knew the serious nature of his wound, his one thought was to avoid the intrigues and competitions his death was sure to provoke. He sent for six of the most considerable personages in Islam, those whom he considered the safest, the most devout, the most disinterested, and he charged them to nominate the new Caliph. Among the six there figured Ali, Othman, Zobeir and Talha (644).

Omar's foresight was justified, but his precautions were in vain. No sooner was he dead than there was a swarming of intrigues—between the Meccans and the Medinans; between the members of the selection committee who themselves intrigued for power; between Aïsha, the widow of Mahomet and his daughters, one of whom was Ali's wife and the other the wife of Othman. Actuated by diverse motives, they all agreed upon the choice of Othman. They chose him because of his great age—he was seventy —which gave them hopes of a speedy succession;

[1] Qot'B Eddin, op. cit.

Aïsha accepted him to avoid the nomination of Ali; the Koreich because they thought they had sufficient influence over him to wield power in his name; the Medinans because he was pious, modest and retiring; the true Musulmans because he had been one of the earliest companions of the Prophet and was his son-in-law; the mob because he was rich and open-handed.[1] Othman-Ibn-Affan had been, in his prime, a man of fine energy and noble character; in old days he had filled at Mecca the rôle of a grand seigneur; but after his conversion to Islam, and his stay at Medina, perhaps also as the result of his age, his temperament had become somewhat changed. Praying and fasting with exemplary zeal, extremely good-natured and modest, he might have been taken for a saint of Medina; his piety had made him popular among the fanatical Musulmans, but he was not the man for the position of Caliph. He was so shy that when he went up into the pulpit for the first time in the mosque at Medina he had not the courage to begin his sermon. " To begin is very difficult," he murmured with a sigh and left the pulpit.[2]

The Meccans skilfully exploited the feebleness of the new Caliph; they surrounded him with attentions and flattery, played upon his sentiments of family solidarity, and understood so well how to obtain his confidence that they ended by governing in his name. These men who had only accepted Islam with the sword at their throat, and who since their conversion had always lived in sullen revolt, captured all the offices. This time the Meccans had their revenge, and they made the most of it. All authority passed into their hands, and, by a singular anomaly, it was precisely the former enemies of the Prophet who

[1] Qot'B Eddin, op. cit.
[2] Dozy, op. cit. p. 45.

were now charged to watch over the interests of Islam.

Merwan, a cousin of the Caliph, became his secretary and vizier; he was the son of Hakam whom the Prophet had cursed and banished for treachery after the taking of Mecca.

Maowiah was maintained as Governor of Syria; he was the son of Abu-Sofian, leader of the troop that had beaten Mahomet at Ohod, and had besieged him at Medina. His mother, Hind, was a virago who had made herself a necklace and bracelets out of the ears and noses of the Musulmans killed at Ohod; she had opened the belly of Hamza, the uncle of the Messenger from God, and had dragged out his liver and torn it to pieces with her teeth.[1]

Abd-Allah, foster-brother of the Caliph, was appointed Governor of Egypt. Formerly, when secretary to the Prophet, he had been cursed by him for having intentionally altered the meaning of certain revelations in order to turn them into ridicule among his friends.

Walid, his half-brother, was Governor of Kufa; he was the son of Okba who had spit into Mahomet's face; on another occasion he had almost strangled him; later, when he was made prisoner by the Prophet, and condemned to death, he had cried: "Who will take care of my children after me?" and Mahomet had replied: "The fire of hell!" The victim's son, *the child of hell* as he had been called, seemed anxious to justify this prediction. One night, after a supper made merry by wine and the presence of some pretty singing-girls, as the dawn was approaching he heard the muezzin intone the call to prayer from the top of a minaret. His brain still fuddled with the fumes of wine, and without any

[1] Dozy, p. 47.

other garment but his tunic, he betook himself to the mosque and there stuttered through the customary formulæ; then, with the swagger of a drunkard, to prove to himself that he had not drunk too much, he asked the congregation whether he should add another prayer. "By Allah!" thereupon cried a pious Musulman, "I expected nothing else from such a man as thou; but I never thought they would send us such a Governor from Medina."

Such were the personages, who, favoured by the feebleness of an old man, exercised authority. The Caliphate of Othman was the Caliphate of the comrades; it was the exploitation of Islam by the Koreich party, of whom the most active representative at that time was Maowiah, Governor of Syria. The Meccans took advantage of circumstances to avenge themselves upon the Old Musulmans of Medina. Several companions of the Prophet were maltreated; the generals who, under Abu-Bekr and Omar, had conquered Irak, Syria and Egypt, were dismissed, and their places filled by members of Othman's family or by favourites. The commandments of religion were disdained; morals were relaxed; the customs of paganism were once more in the ascendant.[1]

There was an outburst of indignation at Medina; the citizens were exasperated by seeing power escape them; fuel was added to their wrath by Ali, Zobeir and Talha, who were intriguing for the Caliphate, and having based their hopes on the speedy demise of Othman, now dreaded the ambition of the Meccans.

On her side, Aïsha, displeased with the attitude of the Koreich towards her, was intriguing among the tribes, inciting them to revolt and giving them as leader an ambitious young man named Mohammed,

[1] Es-Samhoudi, "Hist. de Médine."

the son of Abu-Bekr, whose vanity she had flattered and played upon.

All this ill-feeling was focused upon Othman. A trivial incident precipitated events: when the Caliph went up into the pulpit at the mosque for the daily sermon, he took the same seat as Mahomet used to do, instead of sitting two steps lower down, as his predecessors had done. This action, probably unconscious, was exploited by the Caliph's enemies, who accused him of making light of the memory of the Prophet. The former companions of Mahomet called upon him for an explanation, and he ill-used their messenger. On the following day, as Othman was about to take his usual place in the mosque, the Old Musulmans struck him and he would probably have been killed but for the intervention of Ali, always generous. An excited mob, at the instigation of Mohammed, son of Abu-Bekr, a tool of Aïsha's, besieged the Caliph's house and called upon him to resign. Othman refused; the insurgents then forced their way in and killed him.[1] The unfortunate old man paid with his life for his attachment to family solidarity.

During his Caliphate, Othman had added Armenia to the countries already subject to Islam. This province, taken from the Byzantines by the Persians, was torn by religious conflicts; the Byzantines had spread Christianity among the people, but the nobles of the country had remained faithful to their old traditions and still practised Mazdeism. The Persians, taking an opposite line, persecuted the Christians and gave all the government posts to Ghebrs. The latter committed such exactions that the people, dying to get rid of them, welcomed the Musulman invasion.

[1] Tabari, "Annales."

In Egypt, the new Governor, Abdallah Ben Saad, the unfaithful transcriber of verses from the Koran, a creature of the Koreich party, invaded Tripolitania and Byzacene (now Tunisia), moved by no very keen desire to make converts to Islam, but rather to give opportunities for pillage to his undisciplined troops.[1] Under Roman rule these provinces had been celebrated for their marvellous prosperity. The Roman colonists were rough peasants, who knew how to force the soil to yield, and had transformed the country into one vast orchard by developing the cultivation of the olive and by a system of irrigation that no other nation has surpassed. But the Vandal invasion had ravaged this fertile country and destroyed the greater part of the irrigation works: and the Byzantines, in their hasty operations, had not succeeded in restoring the former prosperity. A government overburdened by officials, the pet vice of the Emperors, entailed considerable expenditure: the consequent taxation weighed heavily upon the Berbers, who in the exasperation of their poverty were in a chronic state of revolt.[2] Like so many other nations, they saw in the Musulmans their chance of freedom.

Gregory the patrician, Governor of the Greek possessions in Western Africa from the Barca desert to the Straits of Gibraltar, raised a "scratch" army which was decimated at the first encounter. The Musulmans gained considerable booty; at the sack of Suffetula (Sbeitla) alone every horseman received three thousand pieces of gold, and each foot soldier one thousand.

The Greeks, realizing the difficulty of the situation, owing to the hostility of the Berbers, hastened to

[1] Al Wakedi.
[2] Diehl, "L'Afrique Byzantine."

come to terms with Abdallah Ben Saâd who, in consideration of an indemnity of two and a half million dinars, consented to return to Egypt. We can judge from this example that Othman's generals concerned themselves but little with religious propaganda; they preferred cash. Neither Khalid, Amru nor Zobeïr would have acted thus.[1] Othman's actual conquests were therefore trifling.

After his assassination, the Old Musulmans, fearing the intrigues of the Meccans, hastened to raise Ali to the Caliphate, in spite of the active opposition of Aïsha. This was the revenge of the Medinans.

Of a generous disposition, and, moreover, well pleased to be at the head of affairs, Ali would willingly have avoided reprisals; but, to satisfy the people about him he had to put orthodox Musulmans into all government posts in place of Othman's favourites. But this did not prevent them from forming factions.

Talha, Zobeïr, and Mohammed, the son of Abu-Bekr, in causing Othman to be assassinated had calculated on taking his place. Disappointed in ambition, they took up a position hostile to Ali; they left Medina with rage in their hearts and joined forces with Aïsha who was cursing the new Caliph with all the passion of a woman and an Oriental.

Posing hypocritically as the avengers of Othman, secretly supported by the Meccans, they took refuge in Mesopotamia where they collected together all the malcontents. Ali followed them and defeated them in the battle of the Camel (656). Talha and Zobeïr were killed; Aïsha, taken prisoner, had to implore her enemy's pardon.

This success assured to the Caliph the submission

[1] Sedillot, p. 160.

of Arabia for the time being as well as of Irak and Egypt: there remained Syria. The Governor, Maowiah, gave out that he could not serve under a man who had not only left the murder of his kinsman unpunished, but had even granted favours to the assassins. As a matter of fact, Maowiah cared little about the call of the blood, but was tortured by ambition. He was very popular in Syria through his open-handedness, his luxurious court, and his liberalism; he had, moreover, amassed considerable wealth, had set up an army of his own, and aspired to the Caliphate.[1]

The moment seemed to him to be propitious. Ali counted but few friends; the murder of Othman, of which he was innocent, but which was, nevertheless, laid to his charge, had cost him the moral support of the masses. Maowiah calculated that, whenever he should take up the position of the avenger of his old relative, he would receive unanimous approval; but above all he counted upon his money to bring him adherents. He had besides one valuable auxiliary, Amru, the conqueror of Egypt, who was popular throughout Islam and who, on his dismissal by Omar, had thrown in his lot with the Koreich.

At the head of an army of eighty thousand men, Amru marched against Ali.[2] The rivals met in the plain of Seffin on the western bank of the Euphrates. The Caliph, feeling little confidence in the fidelity of his troops, hesitated to give battle, and attempted negotiations, but without result. Battle was joined; on the side of Ali, the old companions of the Prophet accomplished prodigies of valour; their staunchness was on the point of succeeding, when Ali was the

[1] Dozy, "Essai sur l'Hist. de l'Islamisme."
[2] Ch. Mills, "Hist. du Mahométisme."

victim of an act of treachery of which the Arab authors have related all the details.[1] It will be well to give a resumé of them, as they throw a clear light upon the psychology of the Musulman.

At the moment when Maowiah, certain of his defeat, was making ready to fly, he caught sight of one of his counsellors, Amr, the son of Aci: "You, who pride yourself upon your cunning," he said, "have you found a remedy for the disaster that is threatening us? You know I have promised you the governorship of Egypt if we win. What is to be done?"

Amr, who had spies among Ali's people, replied: "You must order all your men who possess a copy of the Koran to tie it to the end of their lances; at the same time you will declare that you appeal to the decision of the book. I guarantee that this is good advice."

Foreseeing the possibility of defeat, Amr had arranged this stratagem in advance with several of the leaders of the opposing army, notably with a certain Akhath, a man of well-known perfidy.

Maowiah followed Amr's advice and ordered the Korans to be tied to the lances. So little had the Holy Book spread that in this army of eighty thousand men only five hundred copies could be raised. But that was enough in the eyes of Akhath and his friends, who, pressing round the Caliph exclaimed: "We accept the decision of the Book of God; we desire a suspension of hostilities."

"This is an infamous trick," said Ali with indignation, "the Syrians hardly know what the Koran is."

"But since we are fighting for the Book of God, we cannot refuse to admit it."

[1] Masoudi and Khahrastani.

"We are fighting to compel the pagans to submit themselves to the laws of God. Do you suppose then that this Maowiah and Amr and all the rest of them trouble themselves about religion and the Koran? I have known them from childhood, they are scoundrels."

"That does not matter, they are appealing to the Book of God, and you are appealing to the sword."

"Alas! I see only too clearly that you mean to desert me. Go then, and rejoin the coalition formed formerly against our Prophet! Go and re-unite yourselves with these men who say: 'God and his Prophet, all that is lies and imposture!'"

"Send an order at once to Akhtar (the leader of the cavalry) to retire; if you don't, the fate of Othman awaits you."

Knowing that they would not shrink from carrying out their threat, Ali yielded. He sent the order to retreat to the victorious general who was pursuing the enemy at the sword's point. Akhtar refused to obey. Then a new tumult arose. Ali repeated his order.

"But doesn't the Caliph know that the victory is ours?" cried brave Akhtar. "Shall I turn back at the moment when the enemy is about to suffer a complete rout?"

"And what good would victory do you if in the meanwhile Ali was killed?" said an Irak Arab, one of the messengers.

The general resigned himself to retreat; fighting ceased; Ali sent to ask Maowiah in what way he counted upon adjusting their differences by the Koran. Maowiah replied that they should each name an arbiter, and that these two personages should decide according to the Book of God.

Maowiah chose his faithful counsellor Amr, son of Aci. Ali had at first named his cousin, Abd'Allah; but as it was objected that his near kinsman would naturally be partial, he proposed Akhtar, the victorious general. This choice was also rejected, under the pretext that Akhtar, being one of the principal actors in the struggle could hardly be looked to for counsels of moderation.

"Very well," said Ali, "name the arbiter yourself!"

Akhath, the treacherous ally of Maowiah, was chosen.

"But," cried Ali, in a climax of indignation, "Akhath is my enemy, he detests me because I took the governorship of Kufa away from him." This protest was in vain; Ali was given to understand that he must conform to the general opinion, otherwise he would be forced to do so.

The result of the arbitration could not be doubtful; Maowiah was proclaimed Caliph. Refusing to accept such a judgment, Ali collected together the few faithful followers who stood by him and wished to continue the fight. Deserted by his troops, who had been won over by the bribes of his rival, he lost Egypt and Arabia one after the other. It was then that the fanatics resolved to suppress the authors of this fratricidal contest, Ali, Amru, and Maowiah, in order to restore calm. But Amru and Maowiah were only wounded, whilst the unlucky Ali, the poor Don Quixote of Islam, was killed.

His son Hassan was proclaimed Caliph by the inhabitants of Kufa; but Maowiah was the real sovereign since he reigned over Syria, Egypt, and Arabia (661).

The period of which the chief events have just been sketched is chiefly occupied with the rivalry

between Mecca and Medina. The Medina party triumphed at first with Mahomet, when he fled from Mecca and took refuge with them; they also triumphed under his successors, Abu-Bekr and Omar.

The Mecca party took their revenge with Othman; fortune forsook them with Ali, but returned to them with Maowiah. This rivalry between Mecca and Medina dominates the whole history of Islam. It reveals the individualist spirit of the Arab, at the same time as it exposes to view the germ of the evil that later on was to contribute to the ruin of the Empire of the Caliphs.

The period between the death of Mahomet (632) and that of Othman (656) was of capital importance to the Arabs and to Islam. In the short space of twenty-four years, the Bedouins, driven by poverty and the lust of plunder, left their deserts and rushed upon countries of Greco-Latin civilization. In Persia, Syria, and Egypt, they came into close contact with populations impregnated with Hellenism and Latinism, and naturally fell under their influence: they passed in a stride, as it were, from barbarism to civilization.

The Islam that they carried with them in their warlike onslaught was then but a poor sort of faith, bare as the desert, empty as a Bedouin brain; but this faith, still only a babbling of religion, was not yet codified, drawn up and fixed; it rested merely upon two or three general principles, thus leaving room for a whole development of religious sentiments.

The Arabs, incapable of invention, ignorant and illiterate, brought nothing to the peoples they subjected; on the contrary, they borrowed everything from them—methods of government, scientific knowledge, arts, and crafts. Their education was to be begun and carried through by the people they

had vanquished; they became Latinized and Hellenized to the very feeble extent permitted by the coarseness of their nature. Islam loaded itself with foreign beliefs, especially with what it borrowed from Christianity. If this process of assimilation could have gone on, if it had not been arrested in the second century of the Hegira by the Abbasside Caliphs, the Arabs would have been completely Latinized and Islam would have been dissolved in the Christian religion. But, from their contact with Greco-Latin civilization and with Christianity, the Arabs and Islam have preserved a sort of reflected lustre which has been mistaken for a civilization of their own, and has induced belief in an originality they never possessed. Nevertheless, these foreign contributions were so little in accord with the Arab spirit that they produced a hostile reaction which, from the beginning of the second century of the Hegira, has tended furiously to purify Islam, and to bring it back to its primitive nakedness. It was this reaction that dragged down into barbarism the nations subjected to the Arabs and stifled the last efforts of Greco-Latin civilization.

CHAPTER VII

Islam under the Ommeyads — The Theocratic Republic becomes a Military Monarchy—The Caliphate established at Damascus, where it comes under Syrian influence, that is to say, Greco-Latin—The rivalries which divided Mecca and Medina break out between these towns and Damascus —The conquest of the Moghreb, then of Spain, realized through the complicity of the inhabitants, anxious to get rid of the Greeks and Visigoths—The attempted conquest of Gaul fails owing to the stubborn resistance of the Franks, and marks the limit of Musulman expansion—The Ommeyad dynasty, extinguished in orgies of Byzantine decadence, gives place to the dynasty of the Abbassides.

WITH Maowiah the dynasty of the Ommeyads begins. The scene of the struggle for power is shifted. The leading Meccan families have emigrated to Syria where, through the favour of the new Caliph, they enjoy all the good things in his gift. It is now the Koreich of Mecca who govern Islam from Damascus. The Medina party, the *Old Musulmans*, the strict believers, faithfully devoted to the doctrine of Mahomet, struggle no longer against Mecca but against Damascus, or rather against Syrian influence. For, whilst the Koreich of Mecca, now established in Damascus, held power nominally, it was in reality the Syrians who exercised it; that is to say, a non-Arab people, converts of recent date, who had as yet received but a faint impression of Islam. And as the Syrians were of Greco-Latin civilization, the struggle was in the end between this classical influence and Arab mentality.

The Syrians had recovered their former position; for, whereas under the Caliphate of Omar they had been treated as pariahs, under Maowiah they enjoyed untrammelled freedom.[1] A clever people, intellectually emancipated, little troubled by scruples of conscience and capable of adapting themselves to circumstances with wonderful pliability, they had willingly gone over to Islam, since their conversion enabled them to enjoy the same rights and privileges as their conquerors. But, nevertheless, under the outward show of Mahometanism they had kept intact their own customs and mentality. And as, by their knowledge and education, by their Greco-Latin culture, they were the only people capable of holding administrative posts, it was they who governed on behalf of the Arab conqueror. Their activity did not stop there.

As heirs to the Byzantine civilization, of a culture incomparably superior to any that may have been possessed by the Arabs, they had given to Rome the family of the "Syrian Emperors," who reigned from Septimus Severus to Alexander Severus. *Au courant* with the latest advances in science, art, and the philosophy of the Greco-Latin schools, they exerted a considerable influence upon every phase of contemporary thought.

In the Damascus of that day the greater part of the Greek and Latin authors were known; many people read them in the original, whilst numerous Syriac translations placed them within reach of the masses. People were quite carried away by their enthusiasm for the theories of the various philosophers.

Before the Arab conquest, in the time when Christianity prevailed, they carried on controversies

[1] G. Weil, "Hist. des Califes."

on the most strained subtleties of religious metaphysics; they argued about the human and the divine nature of Christ; at Damascus they were monophysite, that is to say they considered any distinction between the two natures impossible, since the divine had absorbed the human nature.[1]

Syrian architects, by combining Greek with Persian art, had created what came to be called Byzantine art. It was they, notably, who constructed the first domes; that of Santa Sophia (532) is the work of the Syrian Athemios of Thrales.

We see to how high a degree of intellectual culture the Syrians had attained, and how far superior they were to their Arab masters—rough, coarse soldiers, solely preoccupied with the enjoyment of life without troubling themselves as to what philosophers might think about it.

The Syrians took up the education of their conqueror; they taught the ignorant Bedouin the science and art of Greece; the Bedouin did not understand it all, his brain was not yet sufficiently supple; he retained of this teaching only just so much as was accessible to him, but what he did retain was in its essence exclusively Greco-Latin. What he acquired was Greco-Latin civilization as assimilated by the Syrians, that is to say, somewhat distorted in transmission through an Oriental mentality.

Those Arabs who had emigrated to Syria came completely under this foreign influence; as primitive creatures, they were at once captivated by the science of luxury, of comfort and of elegance seen at its best in this refined society. The comfortable houses, the baths, the choice food, the dress, the perfumes, the perverted pleasures of sense filled them with delight of which they had had no previous conception. They

[1] Lebeau, "Hist. du Bas-Empire."

made no resistance to the temptation to imitate the Syrians and to live as they did. The Caliph set them the example: Maowiah was an intelligent Bedouin and a hedonist in one. From the time when he was a provincial governor, under the Caliphate of Omar, he had adopted the manners of the country. Raised to supreme power, he continued a mode of life that responded to his tastes. The Musulman Court at Damascus came to resemble the former Byzantine court; it copied, sometimes to the length of caricature, its elegance, its luxury, and its pleasures. Syria may be said to have been the tomb of Arab energy; there the Bedouins attained a certain degree of culture and refinement; but they lost their sobriety and their powers of endurance. Byzantine civilization followed the course of its evolution under Musulman domination, and the conquering Bedouin, incapable, by reason of his ignorance, of giving any sort of direction to this evolution, could only admire from a distance and from below.[1]

This Arab-Syrian society formed a remarkable contrast to that of Medina; in the latter it was a Musulman society, such as Mahomet had imagined, or such at least as his bigoted disciples had evolved from a too narrow and too strict interpretation of the Prophet's injunctions. In Syria it was a Byzantine society behind a Musulman façade. The two societies could neither understand nor like each other. The violent strife which had formerly divided Islam through the rivalry of Mecca and Medina was followed by the exasperated hostility of Medina against Damascus.

The Medina party set their hopes upon Hassan, son of Ali, who had been proclaimed Caliph at Kufa;

[1] G. Weil, "Hist. des Califes."

but this young man, the degenerate son of the most noble representative of Islam, was nothing but an effeminate voluptuary, leading a life of debauchery and low sensuality surrounded by women and favourites. He would have been quite content to continue his life of pleasure; but his party, amongst whom was Kaïs, *the Defender*, son of Saâd, a wild fanatic, compelled him to take the field. He resigned himself to their demands, much against the grain, but conducted the war with such indolence and such notorious incapacity that his troops were soon decimated. It is even probable that this cowardly creature tried to insure himself against the future by treating secretly with Maowiah. In any case, he made his first check a pretext for concluding an arrangement with his rival, by which he gave up his claims to the Caliphate in consideration of a magnificent pension.

Kaïs had to get back to Arabia with a few faithful followers; he took refuge in Medina, where the inhabitants, discouraged and unable to contend openly against the Caliph, were forced to disguise their feelings and hope for better times (661).[1]

Maowiah, relieved from the anxiety of civil war, continued his life of luxury and entertainments; and, as it took a great deal of money to keep up such state, he set himself to get it out of the conquered peoples. Circumstances compelled him to take up the rôle of administrator, in which he displayed marked ability. He entrusted the government of Egypt to his faithful Amru, who was instructed to squeeze the people. Maowiah even undertook certain conquests. Whilst he was governor of Syria, he had taken possession of the islands of Crete, Cos, and Rhodes (649). In 655 he had destroyed an

[1] Es-Samhoudi. "Hist. de Médine."

important section of the fleet of Constantine II., off the coast of Lycia. He now conceived the idea of attacking Constantinople, but his efforts were in vain. The Greeks had made a discovery which assured them a marked superiority over their adversaries—"Greek fire"—which enabled them to burn ships from a distance and had a terrifying effect upon their assailants. Greek fire may be said to have prolonged the existence of the Byzantine Empire.

Maowiah looked for more easily attainable success in another quarter: he sent an army into Byzacena—the present Tunisia—where, aided by dissensions among the Berbers and by their hostility to the Greeks, this army took possession of the province (665).[1] The Caliph entrusted the government of the conquered territory to a Musulman fanatic, Okba Ben Nafa. Impelled by proselytizing zeal, the latter overran North Africa, burning, slaughtering, and pillaging. He reached the farthest shores of Morocco; and it is said that, carried away by religious exaltation, and finding his task all too soon accomplished, he rode into the sea, and when his horse could go no farther, cried: "God of Mahomet, if I were not held back by these waves, I would go on and carry the glory of thy name to the confines of the Universe!"[2]

It would be a mistake to conclude from the rapid conquest of the Moghreb that Islam had at its disposal any prodigious material force. Okba's troops numbered no more than a few thousand men, but they were war-worn veterans and hungry for plunder. The Greek troops, even less in number, were of poor quality, and the Berbers, who formed the bulk of the population, were hostile to them.

[1] Diehl, "L'Afrique Byzantine."

[2] Abd-Er-Rahman Ibn Abd-El-Hakem, the earliest historian of the Moslem invasion of the Moghreb.

These same Berbers, almost all of them Christians, were not very learned in the matter of dogma; their belief was freely tinged with paganism; the majority of them knew no more than the bare outline of the Christian tenets, and were ignorant of the details of its doctrine and worship. The reason is simple: the language of religion was Latin, and the country Berbers only spoke a dialect allied to Phœnician.

Saint Augustine has frequently insisted upon the difficulties that the general ignorance of the Latin tongue placed in the way of Christian missionaries in Africa.[1] And as the numerous Christian sects, divided by metaphysical subtleties, threw further confusion into the native mind by their discussions and their polemics, the rural populations, incapable of establishing any distinction between Christianity and Islam, not unnaturally mistook for Christians those who spoke to them of a one and only God, of the day of resurrection, of a messenger sent by God, and of a revealed Book, all expressions that could equally be applied to the God of the gospels, to Christ and to the Holy Scriptures.[2] So that from the very first the Berbers receïved the Musulmans without hostility; some of them saw in the invaders Christian schismatics; the majority looked upon them as liberators who came to rid them of their Greek oppressors.[3]

Later on, when they came to know the Arabs better and made acquaintance with the bigoted tyranny of Musulman law, they changed their opinion; but then the time for resistance had gone by. Thinking to escape from the Greeks, they had

[1] Saint Augustine, Serm. 25, Id. De Moribus; Manichœorum, C. 19.

[2] H. Ritter, "Hist. de la philosophio chrétienne."

[3] Ibn Adhari, "Hist de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne."

fallen into the hands of other masters just as pitiless and in addition fanatical.

Before his death, Maowiah, under the advice of the Koreich emigrants in Syria, and with a view to benefiting his own family, wished to make the Caliphate hereditary. To avoid the election which it had hitherto been customary to hold, he appointed his son Yezid as his successor.

Yezid, the son of a high-spirited Bedouin mother, had been brought up in the desert in the rough and dangerous life of a nomad. Blunt in speech, he despised the pomp of palaces, the etiquette of courts, the hypocritical diplomacy of refinement.[1] He was a haughty Bedouin, rough, generous, capable of the worst violence and of the most crazy liberality, with no other rule of conduct than the gratification of his passions. He loved sport, the pleasures of the table, women, wine, and play; he troubled himself but little about religion, but believed just about enough in God and his Prophet to be a Musulman; but any strict observance of the Koranic commandments was not to be expected of him.

As he was wont to give expression to his thoughts crudely, without tact or reserve, and as he treated the faithful believers as hypocritical bigots, he was looked upon by the Old Musulmans of Medina as a horrible pagan. Having the support of the Syrians, who regarded him as a worthy successor to Maowiah, a young wild animal whom they proposed to tame, he was able to laugh at the indignation of the pious party.

He had a difficult start: the Hedjaz and Irak, judging the moment propitious, rose in revolt for various reasons. The peasants of Irak, who had only been broken to Islam by the worst acts of violence,

[1] G. Weil, "Hist. des Califes."

loathed the Arabs, whose exactions had ruined them; they longed to escape from the necessity of paying the heavy tribute demanded by the conqueror, and to regain their liberty. The people of the Hedjaz claimed to conserve the right of proclaiming the sovereign, in the hope of nominating one of themselves, and of keeping the seat of the Caliphate at Medina.

This was the old opposition of the men of Medina to Damascus and the Ommeyads; and it was further increased by the contempt with which Maowiah had treated the Arab provinces. He had forced upon them governors of inconceivable brutality, such as Ziad, his adopted brother, who, accompanied by spies and executioners, mercilessly stamped out every show of insubordination.

It was in these circumstances that Hassan, the eldest son of Ali, the former adversary of the Caliph, had been poisoned at Medina; that Aïsha, the intriguing widow of the Prophet, had been killed; that Hejer, an important personage in Kufa, too devoted to the cause of the Alides, had been executed, and that at Bassora eight thousand rebels had been exterminated in a few months. In short, the men of Medina, who had always been staunch in their bigoted puritanism, would not allow the highest dignity in Islam to be entrusted to a prince who in their opinion was a Musulman in name only.

The rebels confided the defence of their cause to Hussein, the second son of Ali, who was distinguished by his energy and by his hatred of the Ommeyads. When he heard of the coming of Yezid, he exclaimed: "Never will I recognize Yezid as my sovereign; he is a drunkard and a debauchee, and is mad upon hunting."

Impetuous by nature, Hussein took up the

struggle with more vigour than ability; and being drawn into an ambush he was killed (680). When the news of his death reached the Hedjaz, the fervent Musulmans were astounded; it seemed as if the divine protection had forsaken them; they were plunged into depression, when Abd'Allah, son of the Zobeïr who had been Ali's enemy, came to revive their resentment and had himself proclaimed Caliph at Medina. It was an act of madness. Yezid, with considerable forces at his command, took possession of the town and treated it with implacable rigour. He handed it over to pillage for three days; the mosque, containing Mahomet's tomb, was turned into a stable for the horses of the cavalry; women were violated; children were either massacred or taken into slavery. As for the survivors, they were only spared after they had acknowledged themselves Yezid's slaves and had given him the free disposal of their property. The former nobility of Mecca, who had emigrated to Syria, avenged themselves upon the new religious aristocracy of Medina.

The Medinans had to resign themselves to their fate. But there were some, of proud soul and ardent faith, who preferred to seek a refuge in exile rather than submit. In their search for a new country far enough away from the conqueror for them to be able to live in peace, they found a refuge in the Moghreb where they formed very vigorous communities. It is in these communities that are to be found the origin of the Zaouias, or centres of religious propaganda. By their unremitting piety the refugees exercised a powerful influence over the Berbers of whom they gradually made a complete moral conquest. It is to them that certain portions of the population of the Moghreb owe their attachment to Islam and their bigoted fanaticism.

Even down to the present day, nowhere in all the provinces of Dar-el-Islam is the Musulman religion observed and practised with such fervour. It is the old spirit of Medina that, driven out of Arabia, has remained alive and active among the Berbers through all the intervening centuries.

Yezid intended to continue his work of pacification; but death cut it short (683).

There followed a fresh period of anarchy, with all the provinces in a state of effervescence, each one of them claiming the right to choose the Caliph, and, lest they should be anticipated, actually nominating him. The Hedjaz nominated Abd'Allah, son of Zobeïr, but he lacked the boldness that compels fortune to yield her favours. Syria chose Maowiah II., son of Yezid; but, as the son of a drunkard, brought up in the effeminate manners of the palace, he was a feeble creature who dared not face battle, and who, moreover, worn out by precocious indulgence in pleasure, died soon afterwards. Some thought of Walid, grandson of Abu-Sofian and a former governor of Medina, but the plague carried him off. Others thought of Khalid, the brother of Maowiah II., but he was still a child.

There was the same ferment in Irak, in Mesopotamia, and in Egypt. Each town elected a Caliph whom it dismissed the following day in order to nominate another. Islam was in a fair way to sink in anarchy when Hussein came upon the scene, the general of the army that had been operating in the Hedjaz. He arrived with a candidate, Merwan, son of Hakem, and a cousin of Maowiah.

A sort of diet was convoked at Djabia to examine the claims of this applicant, and consumed forty days in its deliberations. There was some fear of the friend of Hussein: " If Merwan gets the Caliphate,"

they said, "we shall be his slaves; he has ten sons, ten brothers, ten nephews."[1] But Hussein had powerful arguments at his disposal, he had the army; his choice had perforce to be accepted; nevertheless the Syrians, anxious for their interests, demanded guarantees; and the Caliph had to pledge himself solemnly to govern only in accordance with the counsels of those who had nominated him, and in addition, to designate as his successor the young Khalid who was meanwhile to receive the governorship of Emesa (Homs).

By Hussein's advice, Merwan used force, pacifying Syria and Mesopotamia and then Egypt by fire and sword. He was about to deal with Arabia when death carried him off (684).

His son, Abd-el-Malik, ignoring the promises made to Khalid, the son of Yezid, had himself proclaimed Caliph (685). There ensued renewed movements of revolt; Mecca and Medina rose, then Irak, determined to recover her independence—Irak seething with every form of heresy and schism.[2] In one district Islam would take on the colour of Mazdeism, in another that of Christianity; here Mazdeism would ally itself with Christianity; elsewhere, the three religions would blend together; Irak was thus a perfect Babel of beliefs and dogmas;[3] fanatics ready for martyrdom rubbed shoulders with agnostics; austere believers lived side by side with agreeable Epicureans. Burning conflicts naturally arose, leading to a state of anarchy that exhausted the country.

Abd-el-Malik re-established order by energetic measures. In 690 he had succeeded in imposing his rule upon the Eastern provinces of the Empire.

[1] Ibn-Khaldoun.
[2] Gobineau, "Les relig. et philosophies de l'Asie centrale."
[3] Sylvestre de Sacy, "Exposé de la religion des Druses."

There remained the Hedjaz, in a chronic state of revolt against Damascus. This time it was Mecca that, under the lead of Abd'Allah, son of Zobeïr, was directing the movement. Abd-el-Malik sent a certain Hadjadj, formerly a schoolmaster, who had become chief of the army, through favour, against Mecca.[1] Hadjadj laid siege to the sacred city, an act of sacrilege in the eyes of the believers, but of indifference to him. Abd'Allah held out for eight months; then became discouraged and talked of surrender. His mother, a wild Bedouin, dissuaded him from this course in words of Roman pride:

"Mother," said he, "my friends are forsaking me, and my enemies are again offering me very acceptable conditions. What do you advise me to do?"

"To die," she replied.

"But I am afraid that if I fall into the hands of the Syrians, they will avenge themselves upon my body."

"And what does that matter to you? Does the slaughtered sheep suffer, then, if she is skinned?"

These rough words brought a blush of shame to Abd'Allah's cheek; he hastened to assure his mother that he shared her sentiments, and that he had only meant to prove her. Shortly afterwards, he came again into her presence, armed from head to foot, to bid her a last farewell. As she pressed him to her heart her hand felt a coat of mail.

"When one has decided to die, one has no need of this," said she.

"I only put on this armour to give you some hope," said he, somewhat disconcerted.

"I have bid adieu to hope; take this off!"

[1] Ibn-Kotaiba.

tures; they wished for time to enjoy what they had won, and their general had to take them back to Egypt to let them get rid of their wealth.[1]

The Berbers, emboldened by this hasty retreat, plundered the country. Hassan then returned to Africa determined to make an end of Kahina. But she, cleverly avoiding a set battle, sought to tire out the enemy by rear-guard skirmishes, and to starve him by making a desert of the country round him. "The Arabs," she said, "want to take towns, gold and silver; whilst we only want to keep our fields for cultivation and pasture. I think, therefore, there is only one plan to follow: that is to waste the country in order to discourage them."[2]

By her orders, plantations of trees, the remains of the Roman orchards, were destroyed, houses burned, springs either poisoned or stopped, so that the land from Tripoli to Tangier which used to form one immense garden with villages scattered here and there, was turned into a wilderness.[3]

But the Berbers were incapable of any sustained action patiently pursued in common; they were divided by rivalries and Kahina was betrayed and killed.

Walid made an independent province of the Moghreb which was soon populated by Musulmans who had emigrated from Arabia as a consequence of religious quarrels. Arabs and Berbers finally amalgamated, their mutual resemblance in manners and feelings levelled the barriers which neither the Romans, the Vandals, nor the Greeks had been able to pass, and the Berbers became the firmest supporters of the Musulman cause. When the war was carried

[1] Ibn Adhari, op. cit.

[2] En Noueiri, "Trad. par de Slane, en appendice à l'Hist. des Berbères."

[3] Abd-er-Rahman Ibn Said and El Kairouani.

into Spain, some of them, however, refused to associate with the Arab population, and their descendants, under the name of Kabyles, are now living in the mountains of Algeria, preserving their national character and their hatred of the foreigner.

Moussa ben Noceir, who had been appointed governor of the Moghreb, and whose people he knew from having lived amongst them, succeeded by his able policy in winning the confidence of the Berbers.[1] Taking advantage of their rivalries and differences, he made use of certain sections of them to assist him in subduing the others. He enlisted the better elements in his own troops, thus adding to their power and number. Having at his command considerable forces, he wished to employ them in further conquests. Spain tempted him. He had been led to interest himself in it during the course of the struggles he had had to maintain against the Visigoths near Ceuta. These people had been established in the Iberian peninsula since the fifth century, and also occupied certain points in Moghreb-el-Aksa.

An unexpected occurrence caused him to hasten the execution of his project. Count Julian, the Governor of Ceuta, desirous of avenging an insult, offered him his assistance and advice. Moussa took him at his word, and sent twelve thousand men over into Spain, the greater part of them Berber volunteers attracted by the lust of plunder and led by one of their own chiefs, Tarik.

There happened here again what had formerly happened in the provinces subject to the Persian and Byzantine Governments: the native population, discontented with their lot, received the Musulmans as liberators. Spain, wasted by a succession of

[1] E. Mercier, "Hist. de l'Afrique septentrionale."

He obeyed her, and having prayed awhile in the Kaaba, this hero without heroism threw himself on to the foe and met an honourable death. His head was sent to Damascus, and his body nailed to a gibbet upside down.[1]

Damascus remained the capital of the Empire, whilst Mecca and Medina had to resign themselves to being no more than religious centres.

Hadjadj then pacified Irak, Khorassan, and Seijestan. Abd-el-Malik was able to taste in peace the joys of supreme power. Carrying on the tradition of his predecessors, he adopted the pomp and luxury of the Byzantine emperors. His court followed suit. In contact with sceptics the faith became blunted; the Koran was still regarded as the sole code, but the observance of its commandments was neglected. The Caliphs set the example of lax observance; Yezid drank wine, in spite of the express prohibition of the Prophet; Abd-el-Malik struck coins bearing his own image girt with a sword. These tendencies, exaggerated by the flattery of courtiers, were followed by the greater number; a too rigid piety came to be looked down upon. In contact with so many diverse nations—Greeks, Syrians, Persians, Egyptians, and Berbers, Islam lost its primitive purity; its principles deteriorated. Sects who borrowed their ideas from the doctrines of philosophers and from foreign religions, sprang up on all sides, interpreting the Musulman dogmas in a hundred different ways. The result was a prodigious mixture of beliefs and superstitions which engrafted themselves upon Islam and modified its original inspiration.[2] This influence of foreign nations upon the Arabs is of considerable importance, and will be

[1] Ibn-Kotaiba.
[2] Sylvestre de Sacy, *op. cit.*

studied in greater detail in the further course of this essay.

Before his death, Abd-el-Malik, knowing all he owed to Hadjadj, recommended him to his son Walid: "My son," said he, "always have the most profound respect for Hadjadj; it is to him that thou owest thy throne; he is thy sword; he is thy right arm, and thou hast more need of him than he hath need of thee."[1]

Walid, raised to the Caliphate without opposition, took in hand the pacification of Africa. The Berbers, in accordance with their fickle character, had not been long in rising against the Arabs; taking everything into account, they preferred the Greeks. And so, profiting by the difficulties in which the Caliphs found themselves involved through interior divisions, they joined forces with their former masters in opposition to the Musulmans.

One of Walid's generals, Hassan, then invaded Byzacena (Tunisia), penetrated as far as Kairouan, founded by Okba, but which had been retaken by the Berbers in alliance with the Greeks; he then attacked Carthage, which he took by assault and destroyed, after having put it to the sack. But his task was not yet ended; he had still to subdue the Berbers of the interior. The latter, habitually disunited, were, for a wonder, now united at the call of a woman of great prestige: Kahina. Endowed with superhuman energy, skilful to profit by the most trivial events to draw from them ingenious deductions, brave almost to foolhardiness, she exercised a powerful ascendancy over the tribes who rose at her appeal. Circumstances were favourable to her; after the sack of Carthage, Hassan's troops, loaded with a fabulous booty, were not at all anxious to risk fresh adven-

[1] Soyouti, "Tarikh and Kholafa."

improvident governments, was then in a state of open anarchy. The evil dated from far back, from the time of the later Cæsars. The people were divided into five classes: the rich, the favourites of fortune, great landed proprietors, living in idleness on the labours of *metayers*, and slaves.[1]

The plebeians of the towns, a riotous mob, formidable on account of their numbers, and trading upon the fear they inspired, lived, without working, on the free rations of the government and the charity of the rich.

The curiales, small proprietors living in the towns, were charged with the administration of municipal affairs. These functions had been entrusted to well-to-do people because in case of necessity they made up out of their own purses the deficits due to the insolvency of the tax-payers—by no means an enviable post, involving heavy obligations. The curiales were not even able to escape by tendering their resignations or by selling their property, because the office was in its nature hereditary and because they were not allowed to dispose of their property without the authorization of the Emperor, the owner of the soil. Sometimes these unfortunate men, weary of an intolerable existence, abandoned everything and ran away; but they were reinstated in their curia by force, so that the curial dignity, formerly considered as a privilege, amounted to a disgrace and a punishment.[2]

The rural population comprised colonists and slaves: the colonists occupying an intermediate position between the free proprietor and the slave. He was, in fact, a sort of *metayer*, handing over to the owner of the land a settled proportion of the

[1] Dozy, "Hist. des Musulmans d'Espagne."
[2] Sismondi, "Hist. de la chute de l'Empire Romain," t. i., p. 50.

harvest; he could contract a marriage and could hold land, but he could not alienate his property without the consent of his overlord. He paid a personal tax to the State, which had become very heavy in consequence of the ever-increasing demands of the Emperors and the parasitism of the urban population. Colonists were liable, like slaves, to corporal punishment and were forbidden to change their rank. They were slaves not of a master but of the soil, and were attached to the fields they cultivated by an indissoluble hereditary bond, the proprietor not being able to sell his fields without the colonists nor of the colonists without the fields (*adscripti glebæ*).[1]

As for the slaves, their position is too well known for it to be necessary to recall it.

Such a polity was necessarily in a state of unstable equilibrium, since the individual, apart from the rich who were in a small minority, had no interest in maintaining the régime. The curiales, the colonists, and the slaves were too wretched not to hope for some improvement in their position from a change of government. The population of the towns, accustomed to a parasitic life, reckoned upon enjoying this privilege under any régime, and the prospect of troubles could only be pleasing to them as favouring plunder. So it happened that when the barbarians wished to penetrate into Spain, they met with no serious opposition. "On the approach of the Barbarians who advanced sombre, irresistible, and inevitable, men sought to forget their danger in orgies of feasting and drunkenness, to exalt their brains by the delirium of the debauch. Whilst the enemy was forcing the gates of their town, the rich, drunk and gorged with food, danced and sang, their

[1] Giroud, "Essai sur l'Hist. du Droit françois au Moyen-Age," t. i., p. 147.

trembling lips sought to kiss the bare shoulders of beautiful slaves, and the people, to accustom themselves to the sight of blood and to intoxicate themselves with the reek of carnage, applauded the gladiators who cut each others' throats in the amphitheatre."[1]

The Vandals, the Visigoths, and the Suevi ravaged the country, aided in their work of destruction by the ruined small proprietors, by the slaves, and by the townspeople. But their yoke was much more grievous to bear than the former authority of Rome. The people, robbed of all they possessed, treated as slaves and subjected to excessive war levies, soon hated the invaders as they had hated the Cæsars. Every scourge of the Roman epoch was still in existence: property in the hands of a privileged few, slavery, and general serfdom, by virtue of which the cultivators were assigned to the land.[2] The Christian priests were the only ones who had gained by the change. From having been despised and jeered at by the sceptical Romans, they became the counsellors, the directors of conscience of the Barbarians; but they were not equal to the situation; possibly they were overpowered by numbers; however that may be, instead of moderating the brutal instincts of the mass and of preaching to them the lofty sentiments that had been the glory of the downtrodden Church, they flattered their passions and their vices; instead of condemning slavery, they themselves held slaves. Once risen to power, they had forgotten the teachings of Christ.

Spain under the Visigoths was even more unhappy than under the Romans; so that when the troops of Moussa appeared and the Musulman leaders had announced that all those who submitted would enjoy

[1] Salvien, Liv. vi.
[2] Bureau de la Malle, "Econ. pol. des Romains," t. ii., p. 54.

the same rights as their conquerors and would pay no more than the minimum taxes prescribed by the Koran, the populace received them with joy. Roderic, the king of the Visigoths, deserted by his best auxiliaries, was defeated and slain in the first encounter near Xeres (711). It needed only this to bring the worm-eaten Empire down in ruins. The malcontents and the oppressed made the invaders' task an easy one.

The serfs remained neutral from fear of saving their masters; the Jews rose and placed themselves at the disposal of the Musulmans.[1] By 713 the entire peninsula had been brought into subjection.

In Spain there was a repetition of what had taken place in Syria. The people having been under Latin influence for several centuries had attained a high degree of civilization and were possessed of an intellectual culture incomparably superior to that of the Arabs. The misgovernment of the later Cæsars, the exactions and brutality of the Visigoths had paralysed its economic activity and created a state of lawlessness little favourable to the arts and sciences; but they had natural aptitudes and a stock of acquired knowledge that enabled them under a more liberal rule rapidly to recover their former prosperity.

The rule of the conquering Arab was of this character: the taxes he imposed were insignificant in comparison with those of the preceding governments. The land, taken out of the hands of the rich class who held immense estates, badly cultivated by *metayers* and by slaves discontented with their lot, was equitably divided among the inhabitants of the country. It was worked with zeal by its new possessors and yielded abundant crops. Commerce, freed from the fetters which had impeded it and

[1] Dozy, op. cit., p. 35.

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[1] Dozy, op. cit., p. 35.

relieved of the heavy taxes that had borne it down, developed to considerable proportions. The slaves, being allowed by the Koran to redeem themselves by the payment of a reasonable indemnity, set to work with a will. The result was a state of general well-being that caused the Musulman rule to be accepted with favour at first.[1]

The Arabs, incapable of administering the country themselves, passed on this duty to the Spaniards. As in Syria, they adopted the manners and customs of a conquered people more civilized than themselves, and allowed themselves to become softened by the luxury and refinement of Latin decadence. It was once more possible to cultivate literature, the arts and sciences; a new fire of civilization was kindled, or rather relighted, for it was the flame of Greco-Latin genius that sprang up from the ashes under which the barbarism of the Visigoths had buried it. The government was Arab and Musulman, but the community, saturated with Latin and Christian ideas, reacted upon the conqueror and effected a change in his mentality. He in no way contributed to this renaissance, being quite devoid of intellectual culture; he merely noted it, without power to direct or influence it. As for Islam, it did not concern itself with individuals.

Moussa cared little about religion, and his auxiliaries, Berbers for the most part, cared even less. Being besides very little versed in the dogmas and principles of the doctrine in the name of which they had conquered Spain, they left the inhabitants to accommodate themselves to the commandments of the Sacred Book in their own way.[2] The result was a singular mixture of Christian and Musulman ideas.

[1] Dozy, op. cit.
[2] De Castries, "L'Islam," p. 85.

This laxity exasperated the pious believers from Medina who formed part of the conquering army, and was duly reported to the Caliph. Moussa and Tarik, accused of ungodliness, were recalled to Syria. The former was disgraced, then exiled to Mecca, where he ended his days in misery; the latter was detained in Asia, where he was provided with a command.

Under the Caliphate of Walid, the Musulman Empire was greatly extended; to the conquest of Spain must be added that of Tartary and part of India; so that Islam now reigned from Spain to the Himalayas. His successors added little in the way of conquests. His brother Soliman died prematurely after a reign of two years (715-717).

Omar, a cousin of the preceding, a vassal of the Alides, drew upon himself the hatred of the Ommeyads and was poisoned (717-720). He was succeeded by Yezid II., brother of Soliman. It was during this Caliphate that the Musulmans attempted the conquest of Gaul. Here for the first time Islam experienced a check, of which it will not be difficult to point out the causes.

In Syria, Persia and Egypt, in the Moghreb and in Spain, the invader had been assisted by the hatred of the inhabitants of the country for their foreign rulers, whether Byzantines, Sassanians or Visigoths. The position of Gaul was different; set free from the Roman yoke, then upset by the barbarian invasion of the fifth century, the country had passed through a long period of anarchy; but the instinct of self-preservation and possibly some obscure sentiment of order had induced the various tribes who were jostled together in a prodigious mixture, to form themselves into groups according to their interests and affinities.

At the moment of the Musulman invasion, the country was not under the rule of any foreign power,

which would have created malcontents ready for revolt, as was the case in the territories enslaved by Greece and Persia; but, being divided into provinces forming so many small kingdoms, satisfied with their lot, devoted to their customs, and moreover possessing great fighting qualities and that roughness of manners that makes warriors, they were ready to defend their independence.

This was one primary cause of the Arabs' check. Instead of finding a welcoming population hailing them as liberators, they were confronted by men fiercely resolved to defend their liberty to the death.[1] When they had crossed the Pyrenees and were about to invade the Narbonnaise, they met with a furious resistance from Eudes, Duke of Aquitaine, who was determined to guard his privileges.

If the Musulman invasion had been more rapid, it might have been successful by virtue of surprise; but it was slow. The Narbonnaise was like a shield that warded off the first blows whilst the other provinces, warned of their danger, made preparations for the struggle. It would seem too that the invaders had certain failings: they allowed themselves to be captivated by the charms of the ladies of the South. One of their leaders, Othman, married Eudes' daughter and revolted against his General, Abd-er-Rahman or Abderame. These weaknesses and this treason retarded the Arab advance.

They crossed the Pyrenees in 719-720; in 724 they were still waging war in the Narbonnaise; in 725 they had pushed forward an outpost into Burgundy, but they had had to withdraw it, and in 730 they were trying to get possession of Avignon and the Tarraconaise; it was only in 732 that, having subdued the southern provinces, they were able to

[1] Michelet, "Hist. de France."

advance towards the North, where they came into collision with the Francs under Charles, son of Pépin d'Héristal. It had taken them twelve years to come to the battle of Poitiers. This delay was a second cause of their repulse.

It must also be borne in mind that the Arabs and the Berbers found themselves in a country new to them. Gaul was in those days an inhospitable region; centuries of cultivation have since made it more sanitary, and it is difficult at the present day to picture to oneself the country intersected by broad and deep rivers, covered by impenetrable forests and marshes. The soil, sodden with water like a sponge, sank into quagmires where both horse and foot were caught. The cold and damp climate must have tried these men accustomed to the mildness of Oriental skies and to the dryness of Arabia and the Moghreb. Camping out in the mud and the rain, poorly protected by clothing made solely to keep off the heat of the sun, they were attacked by sickness; the pasturage of marshy grass was fatal to their horses, and when, at Poitiers, they had to give battle to the Francs in a decisive action, they were undoubtedly in a condition of inferiority. This was the third cause of their failure.

The Francs, hardy warriors, accustomed to a rough life in an unfriendly climate, in constant conflict with man and with nature, were not effeminate like the Byzantines, the Persians or the Visigoths. Indifferent to wounds or death, they were wild fighters resolved to conquer or to die. When they appeared at Poitiers, clad in mail covered with the skins of wild beasts which gave them a terrific aspect, and uttering savage cries, they terrified the Arabs, and that was the fourth cause of defeat.

There was yet another: The invaders were

divided; the old quarrels of Arabia had followed them into Spain; the Musulman army included refugees from Medina, partisans of Ali, creatures of the Ommeyads, besides Berbers and Visigoths, all of them incapable of understanding one another. There were rivalries and even treachery: witness the defection of Othman.

From all these causes, the Musulmans were beaten at Poitiers; their discouragement was so great, their stupefaction so profound, that they did not even attempt a counter-attack, but fled by night, leaving their baggage in the hands of the Francs. Western civilization was saved. If Islam had triumphed then, France might have been to-day at the level of a Turkish province.

In the course of a few years, the Musulmans lost all the places they had held in the south of France, and in 739 Charles Martel drove them finally out of the country.

During these events, the Caliph Yezid II. had died after a reign of four years, and had been replaced by his brother, Hicham (724-743).

Driven out of Gaul, the Musulmans of Spain penetrated into Sicily, where local dissensions gave them an easy success. The Musulman Empire had now attained its apogee: embracing Asia and the whole of the Mediterranean basin, it was greater than the empire of Alexander and almost as extensive as the Roman Empire; but, by the very reason of its size, it was fragile, for it ruled over people who were too dissimilar to coalesce in a stable empire, and the rapidity of the conquest had left no time for them to adapt themselves to the Islamic discipline. In addition to all this, the Arab was too uncultivated intellectually to have any influence over people who were his superiors in knowledge and in their tradi-

tions; on the contrary, it was he who came under their influence, notably in Syria, in Egypt and in Spain.

To administer this vast empire would have required men of rare energy and superior intelligence; but as we have seen, Syria was fatal to the Caliphs.

Walid II. (743), the successor to Hicham, was an effeminate of the lowest description. His religious indifference was so great that he did not even go to public prayers—a sacred duty for the Caliph—and openly made fun of the Koran.[1] The people of Damascus, although they were by no means austere believers, declined to recognize him, and proclaimed another Ommeyad, Yezid III. (743). Walid II. was killed in a skirmish.

In the absence of any energetic sovereign capable of imposing his rule, the number of rival claimants increased. A grandson of the celebrated Merwan I., also called Merwan, sought to tempt fortune and marched upon Damascus; he found on his arrival that Yezid III. had just died, and he had only to step into his place.

But the grandsons of Abbas who claimed direct descent from the paternal uncle of the Prophet, and who had taken over the claims of the Alides, set on foot an agitation to enable them to seize power. The old struggle was resumed; the governor of Khorassan, Abu-Maslem, raised the people in revolt, and, hoisting the black flag of the Abbassides on his palace at Merou, proclaimed as Caliph first Mohammed, great-grandson of Abbas, then, on his death, his son Ibrahim.

There were thus two Caliphs; Merwan had Ibrahim assassinated, but Abdul-Abbas, Ibrahim's

[1] Ebn-Shonah.

brother, took his place and marched against Merwan. The battle was going in favour of the Ommeyads, when an unforeseen incident reversed their fortunes. At the moment when the Abbasside army was giving way, Merwan dismounted from his horse to rest himself; his horse, startled, rushed into the mêlée, and the Ommeyad combatants, thinking that their leader had been killed, took flight. The Abbassides were triumphant; Merwan took refuge in Egypt, where he was killed.

The Abbassides took severe reprisals upon the vanquished. The Prophet's descendants avenged themselves at last upon those whom they had always considered as usurpers; the relations and favourites of the former Caliph were massacred without mercy. A grandson of Hachem had one hand and one foot cut off, and in this mutilated state he was paraded through the towns of Syria mounted upon a donkey and accompanied by a herald who exhibited him as though he were a wild beast, crying: "Behold Aban, son of Maowiah, he whom they called the most accomplished knight of the Ommeyads." Hicham's daughter, the princess Abda, was stabbed. At Damascus there were numerous executions; in one day alone, ninety Ommeyad leaders were beheaded. These bloodthirsty reprisals won for their author, Abdul-Abbas, the surname of El Saffah, the bloodthirsty.

In such wise came to its end the dynasty of the Ommeyads. Islam owed them much; it was they who built up its power. Free from fanaticism, they had left some liberty to the vanquished peoples, and thus in Syria, in Egypt and in Spain, they had allowed Greco-Latin civilization to put forth new flowers. The Ommeyads, instructed and polished by the Syrians, were to some extent and possibly

unconsciously, the heirs and successors of the Byzantine Emperors. As such, they deserve some recognition. With their successors, the Abbassides, there begins the reaction of narrow fanaticism against liberty of conscience; the reign of blind piety and persecution; it is also the reaction of the Arab spirit, coarse and ignorant, against Greco-Latin culture.

Islam may possibly have gained; civilization has certainly lost.

CHAPTER VIII

Islam under the Abbassides—The Caliphate is transferred from Damascus to Bagdad, where it comes under Greco-Persian influence—Through the administration of the Barmecides, ministers of Persian origin, the Caliphs surround themselves with foreign savants and men of letters, who give to their reign an incomparable splendour; but, in their desire to organize Musulman legislation, the Caliphs, under the inspiration of the Old Musulmans, fix the Islamic doctrine immutably and render all progress impossible—This was the cause and the beginning of the decadence of Mahometan nations—Spain breaks off from the Empire, setting an example of insubordination which is to find imitators later on.

THE revolution which carried the Abbassides to power was the result of a threefold reactionary movement: First, the reaction of the Old Musulmans, of the pious believers, faithfully attached to the traditions of Mahomet, who regarded the Ommeyads not only as usurpers—since they were not descended from the Prophet and had not accepted the principle of election for the nomination of the Caliph—but also as bad Musulmans, because their ancestors had persecuted Mahomet, and because they themselves, indifferent in matters of religion, had adopted Syrian manners and had allowed Greco-Latin civilization to develop.

Then, there was the reaction of Eastern against Western Asia; the populations of Irak, roughly handled by the Ommeyads because they had defended the cause of the Alides, and held in a

condition of servile dependence, had given their support to the Old Musulmans, not from any respect for tradition or from religious scruples, but from the spirit of revenge, to get rid of their oppressors.

Finally, the reaction of the Arab or Bedouin spirit against Greco-Latin and Christian civilization which threatened to absorb Islam.

There was also a question of egoistic interests, as to the seat of the Caliphate. The Old Musulmans intended that it should be brought back to the Hedjaz, either to Mecca or to Medina; the people of Eastern Asia were equally determined to uphold the claims of their own cities. The two parties came to an understanding at first to fight the Ommeyads, and to avenge themselves upon Syria and the Syrians whom they overwhelmed with reprisals and whose prosperity they did their best to ruin. Similarly, they were of one mind in deciding that Damascus should no longer be the seat of the Caliphate; but, when it came to choosing the new capital of Islam, their agreement came to an end.

Abdul-Abbas (750-754), who was not particularly anxious to go either to Mecca or to Medina, set up his court first at Anbar. On his death, his brother, Almansur (754-775), who succeeded him, chose Kufa as his residence; but as this town contained too many zealous partisans of the Alides, he decided to found a new city: Bagdad, on the banks of the Tigris, near the former Seleucia, in the middle of Eastern Asia.

This choice aroused discontent among the Syrians, the Ommeyads, and even among the Old Musulmans of the Hedjaz; and since all these parties, though divided by burning rivalries, were strongly represented in Spain and in the Moghreb, they stirred up risings in those countries. Spain

proclaimed a Caliph of her own choice, naturally an Ommeyad (755). Without going to this length, the Moghreb nevertheless isolated itself, and the two provinces lived apart from the rest of the Empire.[1]

It was ordained as the destiny of the Arabs that they should undergo foreign influence. With no intellectual culture of their own, no artistic, literary or scientific past, devoid of creative genius, they were obliged in all that related to the domain of the mind to accept the help of the foreigner. The Ommeyads had come under Syrian, that is to say, Greco-Latin influence; the Abbassides came under Persian or rather Greco-Persian influence; for Hellenic thought, more or less distorted, had penetrated everywhere in the ancient world.

The administrative methods of the Ommeyads were copied from those of the Byzantines; the government of the Abbassides was inspired by Persian methods. The provincial governors remind us of the former Satraps. Endowed with the most extensive powers, they administered the country, and collected the taxes, by means of which they raised and maintained armies, paid the officials, provided for the construction and maintenance of public buildings, and sent any surplus there might be to the Caliph.

This system of administration had one advantage: it enabled each province to be given the sort of government best suited to its necessities and its customs; but it had also a corresponding disadvantage: inasmuch as it left too much independence to populations insufficiently penetrated by the Musulman ideal, and gave too much authority to the Governors. The latter enriched themselves by scandalous exactions, and surrounded themselves

[1] Dozy, "Hist. des Musulmans d'Espagne."

with devoted followers; then, when they felt themselves sufficiently strong, they rebelled against the central power.[1] This is what had already happened in Khorassan and in Spain; it was to take place later in almost all parts of the Empire.

Almansur tried to remedy this defect by frequent changes of the Governors, and by keeping the representatives of the great families out of these appointments: but it was a vain precaution—the nobodies he substituted for them committed worse exactions still, and were no more loyal.

Bagdad was the case of Damascus over again: the Arabs adopted the manners of the country which were no better than those of the Syrians and Byzantines. Almansur was surrounded by a pomp copied from that of the Sassanian kings. The revenues of the Empire were estimated at thirty millions sterling, which permitted him to display a luxury hitherto unheard of and which was fatal to the Arab character. Surrounded by a brilliant court, dwelling in a wonderful palace, the Caliph became an Asiatic potentate, who only appeared in public on rare occasions, in the midst of an impressive pomp that one finds reflected in the "Thousand and One Nights."

This desire to shine produced at the same time some fortunate results. Wishing, like the Persian sovereigns, to surround himself with all that could contribute to heighten the splendour of power, Almansur showed favour to men of learning and writers and, as there were none of these among the Arabs, his liberality went necessarily to foreigners. There were numerous men of letters in Persia. Certain Christian schismatics and philosophers,

[1] Quatremère, "Mém. hist. sur la dynastie des Khalifes Abbassides."

exiled from the Platonic school of Athens in consequence of the persecutions of Justinian, had introduced into the East the seeds of Western civilization. As in Syria, these men of letters were able to continue their labours from which the Arabs were to benefit at a later date.

Almansur caused translations to be made by Syrian and Persian scribes of the principal Greek authors: Aristotle, Hippocrates, Galen, Dioscorides, Archimedes, and Ptolemy; it was these translations, more or less accurate, that initiated the Arabs into the scientific discoveries of antiquity.[1] As in Syria, and for the same reasons, there was a reawakening of civilization behind a Musulman front, but this blossoming owed nothing to Arab genius; all its sap and all its colour proceeded from Hellenic thought, modified and sometimes distorted by Asiatic influences.

Moreover, it was not so much the Caliphs themselves who favoured art and letters as their ministers, the Barmecides, of Persian origin, who for a century exercised a preponderating influence at the court of the Abbassides. It was these highly educated and widely cultivated men who supplemented the intellectual deficiencies of the Caliphs; who educated them and filled their court with men of learning and of letters. It was they, too, who took in hand the adornment of the city and who designed and carried out those works of public utility that the Arab authors attribute to the Abbassides. The sole authors of the Musulman splendour of this period were the Barmecides, that is to say, Persians, so little Islamized that their enemies accused them of remaining pagans.

[1] Yacoub-Artin Pasha, "L'instruction publique en Egypte," pp. 11 and 12.

Mohammed al Mohadi (785) and his son, Al Hadi (786), who succeeded Almansur, followed his example; or, to put it more correctly, the Barmecides kept them in the right way, for it was they who in reality wielded power; but the pomp and opulence of the earlier Abbasside Caliphs were surpassed by Haroun-al-Raschid (786-809) who has remained in history as the most complete type of Oriental sovereign.[1] Sometimes incredibly generous, ready to pardon any offender and to give lavishly, picking up beggars in the street to raise them to high dignities, protecting the widow and orphan, helping the unfortunate, punishing crime like a knight errant; and then, cruel beyond belief, when the old Arab instincts came through the thin varnish of a borrowed civilization, witness the murder and exile of the Barmecides who had been the builders of Abbasside prosperity. At one time all smiling good-nature, and then odiously proud; brave to foolhardiness, and then degrading himself in the lowest orgies; vindictive and magnanimous, crafty and loyal; always actuated by excess of feeling: in short, all the qualities and all the defects of the Bedouin appeared in him in the most startling way, still further enhanced by the influence of Asia.

With the exception of two expeditions, against the Empress Irene of Constantinople (790) and against her successor, Nicephorus (802), both successful, and entailing on the vanquished the payment of a tribute of sixty thousand dinars,[2] the reign of Haroun-al-Raschid was quiet and devoted entirely to administrative reform. It was an immense task. A complete organization had to be created, as much from the financial as from the legislative point of

[1] Quatremère, op. cit.
[2] Schlumberger, "L'Epopée Byzantine."

view. It was necessary to centralize the payment of public expenses and the collection of the State revenue. This was made up of the produce of the taxes: djezieh, or poll tax on infidels living in a Musulman country; kharadj, land tax paid by non-Musulmans; tithe levied on Musulmans; excise duties on the exploitation of mines; estates reverting to the State for want of heirs; and the tribute imposed on foreign nations.

Acting on the wise counsels of the Barmecides, Haroun-al-Raschid employed the immense revenues of the Empire in useful ways. High schools and libraries were founded for the diffusion of scientific knowledge borrowed from the works of Greek antiquity. The Arab language was propagated in all parts of Asia and finally dethroned the former dialects.[1]

In order to comply with the exigencies of a new nomenclature, it had to be enriched by foreign words taken from Greek and Aramaic. Greek, Syrian, Persian and Indian savants, attracted by the liberality of the Caliph, gave instruction to the Arabs. Thanks to their efforts, mathematics, astronomy and astrology, medicine, chemistry and alchemy were held in honour and made some progress. The Arabs, still ignorant, were slowly emerging from their barbarism by drawing from the treasury of Greco-Latin labours the knowledge they lacked. They were diligent pupils and remarkable compilers; and if, for want of creative spirit, they may have added nothing to the discoveries of antiquity, they did certainly help to spread them abroad. For this reason the Abbassides, and above all their ministers, the Barmecides, deserve to figure among the benefactors of humanity.

[1] Sedillot, "Hist. des Arabes."

It was also necessary to establish a Musulman legislation. Up to that time, the Caliphs or their representatives were dispensing justice by drawing upon the Koran and tradition. This resulted in the formulation of judgments and interpretations often contradictory; and the necessity soon became urgent to fix a doctrine of jurisprudence, to draw up a code which whilst giving some direction to the judges should also afford some guarantee of justice to the contending parties.

This was a work of capital importance, and one that has had considerable influence upon the destinies of the Empire;[1] since by fixing the Islamic doctrine immutably, it has rendered all progress impossible, and has had a paralysing effect upon the Musulman community. It will be dealt with in a special chapter; but we may here remark with astonishment that this work, undertaken in a liberal spirit by the Abbassides should have led to results so completely opposed to the ideas which had inspired it; and that, drawn up as it was by the order of sovereigns so tolerant that many of them were accused of irreligion, this code should have become the instrument of the most bigoted fanaticism.

The great mistake of the reign of Haroun-al-Raschid, a gross fault that was fatal to the future of the Abbassides and even to that of the Empire, was the disgrace of the Barmecides. These Persian ministers, men of eminent intellectual capacity and of a genius that enabled them to face the vastest enterprises, had given enlightened guidance to the Musulman Empire. They were the builders of the prosperity of the Abbassides and of Musulman grandeur. With their disappearance, the Arab

[1] Seignette, "Introduction à la trad. de Khalil"

sovereigns, left to themselves, were quite unable to direct this immense concourse of dissimilar nations, and the Empire fell into decay. It affords one more proof of the incapacity of the Arabs for government and especially for administration.

The successor to Haroun-al-Raschid was his son, Amin, an incapable and effeminate man, who after some years of fruitless reign, had to hand over power to his brother Al Mamun (813-833).

Al Mamun, who cared less about pomp but was a more cultivated man than his father, exercised a most fortunate influence. Surrounded by the élite of Greek, Syrian, Persian, Copt and Chaldean savants, he collected at great expense the works of the school of Alexandria, and had them translated into Arabic and distributed. He multiplied the existing establishments for instruction and even founded a school for girls, at which the professors were women from Athens and Constantinople. Educated by foreign savants in the cult of Greek literature, indifferent to religious ordinances, he displayed a very liberal spirit towards non-Musulmans. He entrusted the greater part of the work of government to Greeks and Persians. His tolerance even caused him to be accused of irreligion, especially when he refused to rage against a new sect, Zendekism, that had arisen in Khorassan by contact with Mazdeism.[1] His love of knowledge was so great that it gave rise to the legend that he declared war upon the Emperor of Constantinople because the latter had refused to send him a certain celebrated mathematician of the name of Leon. Arab authors were given to exaggeration, and it is probable there were other causes for this war, notably the extreme reluctance of the Greeks to

[1] Sylvestre de Sacy, "Exposé de la relig. des Druses."

pay the annual tribute formerly imposed by Haroun-al-Raschid.

From this time (829), hostilities were resumed between the Greeks and Arabs and continued with varying fortunes until 842, under the reign of Motassem, who succeeded Al Mamun.

Al Motassem followed the example of his predecessors; like them, he encouraged science and literature; and like them he was not disposed to favour fanaticism. The struggle of the Old Musulmans against the influence of foreign civilizations, born under the first Ommeyad Caliphs, continued more fiercely than ever.

From the remotest times, there had always been two parties in Islam : the fanatical party, bound to a narrow interpretation of the Koran and to a rigorous submission to its dogmas, and the party of those who sought to enable the Musulman community to benefit by the progress realized by other nations—Greeks, Syrians, Persians, etc.

In reality, the Old Musulmans were originally the men of Medina, that is to say, the representatives of the Mahometan reaction against the old pagan Arab traditions upheld by the men of Mecca. But when the Caliphate was transferred to Damascus by the Ommeyads, and later to Bagdad by the Abbassides, Medinans and Meccans joined forces to resist Greco-Syrian and Greco-Persian influence. They represented, therefore, the Arab, the Bedouin spirit moulded by Islam. It was these two conflicting tendencies that brought into being so many sects all mutually unyieldingly antagonistic.[1]

Under Motassem, one of these sects, drawing its inspiration from Greek philosophic thought, assumed a development peculiar to itself, that of the

[1] Hammer, " Hist. des Assassins. Trad. Hellert and Lanonrais."

Motazelites, who upheld the doctrine of free will. This sect was furiously opposed by the religious party. Motassem protected the Motazelites; if their principles had prevailed, the Musulman world would have been able to develop along the lines of progress and civilization; but the fanaticism of the Old Musulmans carried the day, and the Caliph was unable to lead his liberal ideas to victory.[1]

His successor, Wathiq (842-846), renewed these efforts in favour of the Motazelites and of the liberty of conscience; but he too failed. He had other anxieties; the Greeks wishing to free themselves from the obligation of paying tribute, resumed hostilities. The Emperor Basil was successful in recovering possession of the towns in Cilicia lost by his predecessors.

This was the beginning of the fall of the Abbassides, and, it may be said, of the conquering Arab.

From this date, troubles followed closely upon one another. Caliphs incapable and without authority led a useless existence. Religious schisms, palace intrigues, popular risings, revolts of the conquered provinces, the competition of rival pretenders to the supreme power, insubordination in the army and the ambition of military leaders ruined the prosperity of the Musulman community. The immense Arab Empire, too hastily founded, by a people devoid of intellectual culture and especially of political and administrative capacity, crumbled and sank in the throes of anarchy.

[1] Sylvestre de Sacy, op. cit.

CHAPTER IX

Islam under the last Abbassides—The Musulman Empire on the road to ruin—The Arab conquerors, drowned in the midst of subject peoples and incapable of governing them, lose their war-like qualities by contact with them—Good-for-nothing Caliphs, reduced to the rôle of *rois fainéants*, are obliged in self-defence to have recourse to foreign mercenaries, who soon become their masters—Provinces in obedience to nationalist sentiment break away from the Empire—The last Abbasside Caliphs retain possession of Bagdad only—Their dynasty dies out in ignominy.

FROM the death of Wathiq (846), the Musulman Empire of the East moves forward to its fall. The general causes of this may be noted. The Arab conquerors, swamped in a flood of subject nations, submitted to their influence. This was the more difficult to avoid as in imposing their religion on the conquered they thereby raised them to their own level in regard to status. Every foreigner on conversion became the equal of the conqueror, enjoying the same rights and the same privileges. But the greater part of the subject peoples, the Syrians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Persians, were more cultivated, better educated, more civilized, and more refined than the Arabs, and were alone capable of assuming the different functions of administration. They alone possessed the intellectual culture, the experience and the knowledge necessary for the organization of conquered provinces. They thus became the real masters, and it was they

who practically controlled the power. At Damascus, the Syrians had governed in the name of the Ommeyads; at Bagdad, the Barmecide ministers, of Persian origin, ruled on behalf of the Abbassides.

As the new converts had kept their mentality and their customs, and as they were in far greater numbers, they imposed them on the Arabs to such an extent that, under the Musulman label, the local manners survived; that is to say Greco-Persian manners, the manners of a people already corrupted by the vices of decadence.

In this atmosphere of hyper-refined civilization, the conquerors lost their warlike qualities. As they were devoid of the most elementary intellectual culture, they could not exercise any sort of directive influence on a population superior to them; they were not masters but pupils; they learned and they copied; and naturally, by a very human tendency, they assimilated especially the vices; they became effeminate and corrupted.[1]

By their military success, by their power and their wealth, the Abbasside Caliphs had inspired the neighbouring nations with a fear that secured them a long period of peace. This repose was fatal to them. The Bedouins, created for fighting and a rough life, lost their boldness and vigour. The prodigious wealth resulting from the tribute imposed upon conquered nations and from the revenues of the conquered provinces accomplished their corruption.

Finally, the abuse of a power almost without limits had weakened the Caliphs. Surrounded by a luxury till then unheard of, their heads turned by the

[1] Weil, "Hist. des Califes."

base flattery of courtiers; disposing, at their pleasure, of human lives, they became despots only comparable to the Roman Emperors of the fall. The last Abbassides were notorious for their cruelty, their vices, their irresponsibility, and their incapacity. In the defects of these men, degraded by the abuse of pleasure, without character and without energy, we recognize the signs of the degeneration of a race played-out, worn out too soon by too abrupt a change in its conditions of existence, and corrupted by contact with too advanced civilizations. In less than three centuries the Arabs fell to the level of the Byzantines and the Persians.

The years that followed the death of Wathiq were one long crisis of anarchy. Popular risings and intrigues in the palace rendered the power of the Caliphs precarious; and they strained every nerve to get the utmost of enjoyment out of their ephemeral royalty by giving themselves up to the vilest debauchery. Their court hastened to enrich themselves by the most scandalous exactions. The intellectuals adopted the vain subleties of Byzantinism; everything became a matter for cavil, science, philosophy, and especially religion.

The Musulman doctrine was complicated by all the hypotheses of the Greek philosophers and by every superstition of the vanquished peoples. It was a chaos of beliefs; every day some new sect appeared only to add to the existing confusion. The one would claim that the universe is infinite, which is a serious heresy; another would demand mathematical proofs before it would believe; yet another, seeing that it was impossible to discover truth among so many religious doctrines that contradicted one another, preached agnosticism; certain rhetoricians

The citizens of Bagdad, exasperated at being governed by Turkish mercenaries who squeezed them, revolted, and summoned to their aid the Bouids, who had carved out for themselves a small State out of the former Persian Empire. The Bouids drove the Turks out of Bagdad, and one of them, Moez-ed-Doulat, proclaimed himself Emir-el-Omra (945) and nominated Al Mouti, a member of his family, as Caliph (945-974).

More than ever, it was the Emir who really governed; the nominal Caliphs pass like shadows: Al Tai (974-991), Al Qadir Billah (991-1031), Al Qaim Bi-Amr-Illah (1031-1075). Some of them, to fill up their idle time, devoted themselves to letters, others to debauchery.

Bagdad, ruined by palace intrigues and popular outbreaks, lost its influence and prosperity; deprived of its commerce and of the provincial revenues, it was a head without a body.[1] But life revived elsewhere: in Egypt, in Syria, in Persia, and in India, where representatives of the great local families wielded the sovereignty.

The last Abbassides succeeded each other through the intrigues of the Emirs; Al Mouqtadi (1075-1094), Al Moustadhir (1094-1118), Al Moustarshid (1118-1135), Al Raschid (1135-1136), Al Mouqtafi (1136-1160), Al Moustanji (1160-1170), Al Mousthadi (1170-1180), Al Nasir (1180-1225), Al Dahir (1225-1226), Al Moustansir (1226-1243), Al Moustasim (1243-1258). The last was strangled by the orders of Houlagan, when this Mogul sovereign took possession of Bagdad.

The Abbasside dynasty came to an end in ignominy. Incapable of either government or

[1] Weil, "Hist. des Califes."

administration, devoid of all political intelligence, preoccupied by the sole pursuit of pleasure, the Arab sovereigns were only able to play their part by allowing themselves to be guided by foreigners. All of them, even the most brilliant, were but puppets in the hands of Syrian or Persian ministers who pulled the strings. As soon as this help ceased, their power collapsed.

After all, the splendour of the rule of the Ommeyads and of the earlier Abbasside Caliphs was nothing but the reflection of Greco-Syrian and Greco-Persian civilization. The Arabs could not hinder the ultimate expansion of this civilization, but they did not contribute to its brilliancy. It was the Syrians, the Greeks, and the Persians, Islamized by force, who, in spite of the barbarism of the conqueror, produced the effort that has been wrongly ascribed to the Arabs; and this effort was paralysed, and then completely blocked, when Musulman doctrine, fixed by the doctors of the faith and made absolutely immutable, stopped all innovation, all progress, all adaptation.

It was in the second century of the Hegira that this deadly work was accomplished; and it is from that date that the decadence of the Empire of the Caliphs began. Insensible at first, because of the residual culture of the conquered, who in spite of their forcible conversion to Islam, had kept their mentality and their intellectual baggage, it became more accentuated in the succeeding generations, in proportion as they, brought up in the narrow prison of Musulman dogma, lost their national qualities.

Islam was not a torch, as has been claimed, but an extinguisher. Conceived in a barbarous brain

admitted the existence of God and the mission of the Prophet, but rejected the other dogmas; others more circumspect denied the mission of the Prophet.[1]

Thus there was no religious unity, any more than political unity. Each province, having preserved its customs, considered itself as an isolated State; certain of them showed a tendency to break away from the Empire. Since 750, Spain, and later the Moghreb, had set the example of this emancipation, and as their revolt had remained unpunished, owing to the weakness of the later Abbassides, other provinces, notably Khorassan, had followed their lead. The Musulman Empire was decomposing with the same rapidity as it had been constituted.

Al Moutawakil (846-861), Wathiq's successor, begins the series of incapable sovereigns. He was a sickly, perverted, and unbalanced creature, who displayed the worst aberrations. He surrounded himself with fierce wild beasts, to whom his favourites had to pay court. An eccentric and a monomaniac, in constant fear of assassination, he saw enemies everywhere seeking to destroy him. Haunted by mad hallucinations, he committed abominable crimes: one day he caused one of his viziers to be burnt alive; on another, he summoned the officers of the palace to a banquet and had them all massacred.[2] Nevertheless, he was a man of refinement and a dilettante, loving beautiful verses and eloquent discourses. He was the Nero of Islam. His son, Al Moutanser, assassinated him and seized power (861), but he died soon afterwards, worn out by debauchery (862). A grandson of Caliph Al Motassem succeeded him, borne to power by the Turkish guard. From this

[1] Sylvestre de Sacy, "Exposé de la relig. des Druses."
[2] Sedillot, "Hist des Arabes."

date the order of succession was no longer observed; henceforth it was the mercenaries of the palace who made and unmade the Caliphs.

Since 842, under the reign of Al Motassem, as the Arabs, grown wealthy and weak, showed some reluctance to expose their lives, it had been found necessary to enrol prisoners of war; those from Turkestan having shown themselves the best soldiers, it was from them that the palace guards were selected. These mercenaries, at first the instruments of domination in the hands of the monarch, soon imposed their own will; it was a repetition of what had happened in Rome at the time of the fall.[1]

The foreign troops, subjected to a rough discipline during the Caliphate of Wathiq, set themselves free on his death. It was they who proclaimed Al Moutawakil; then, finding him too mean, they helped his son, Al Mustanser, to get rid of him. Finally, they compelled the latter to exclude his brothers from the succession and to nominate Al Moustaïn Billah as his successor.

From that time onward the Caliphs pass like puppets—the Turkish troops, paid by a pretender, raise him to power, then, having got their wages, they depose him to earn the bribes of the next one.

Al Moustaïn reigned three years (862-866), and was replaced by his brother, Al Moutazz (866-869). The latter, soon deposed, was succeeded by a son of Wathiq, Al Mouthadi Billah (869-870). The mercenaries killed him because he wanted to bring them under some sort of discipline. A second brother of Al Moustaïn, Al Moutamid, was raised to power (870-892). He tried to get the better of the

[1] Quatremère, "Mém. hist. sur la dynastie des Khalifes Abbassides."

general anarchy, but the task was quite beyond his powers.

The provinces too hastily conquered formed a whole without unity. The subject populations accepting Islam and thereby enjoying the same rights as the conqueror, absorbed the Arab element.[1] The Arabs, on the other hand, incapable of exerting any directive control, submitted to the influence of foreign manners and customs. Regional nationalism asserted itself, often encouraged by ambitious governors who dreamed of emancipation; whilst another sentiment urged them to revolt—the desire to escape payment of the tribute.

Following Spain, Khorassan had broken with the central power; and Tabarestan followed its example in 864. In 870, a certain Yakoub-es-Soffar—Yakoub the coppersmith, so-called because his father had been of that trade—had raised the standard of revolt in Sedjestan, and had then taken possession of Khorassan and Tabarestan, thus carving out for himself a small independent kingdom of which the principal towns were Meru and Nichabour. He was even aiming at the Caliphate. To get rid of him, Al Moutamid recognized his sovereignty over the provinces he was holding (877), an act of weakness that served to encourage other ambitious spirits.

Ismael-ibn-Saman, governor of Khowaresm and of Mawarannahar, revolted. An adventurer took possession of Bassorah by the aid of negro troops from Zanzibar, and held out there until 882. Ahmed-ben-Thoulou, a freed Turk, to whom the government of Egypt and Syria had been entrusted, refused to pay the tax (877), and declared himself independent. The Empire was falling into liquida-

[1] Dozy, "Hist. des Musulmans d'Espagne."

tion; there was no energetic sovereign to re-establish order. The Caliphs passed without leaving any trace but the memory of their debauchery and incapacity: Al Mouthadhid (892-902), Al Mouktafi (902-908), Al Mouktadir (908-932), Al Qahir (932-934), Al Radhi (934-940).

Jezireh separated itself from the Empire and formed a small State of which Mosul was the capital. The Turkish troops, now all powerful, pursued their intrigues. Al Qahir was imprisoned by the palace guards, who put out his eyes and then threw him into the street, where he was reduced to begging his bread.

Al Radhi, fearing the dangers of power, handed over all authority to an Emir-el-Omra, Emir of Emirs, and lived as a *roi fainéant*. This was a fresh cause of trouble, for the ambitious intrigued for the Emirate.[1] The head of the Turkish troops led a revolt, besieged the Caliph in his palace and compelled him to recognize him as Emir (940). From this time onward, it was the Emirs who governed—like the mayors of the palace—the Caliph had no longer any authority.

Under the reign of Al Mouttaki (940-944), who succeeded Al Radhi, Armenia, Georgia, and the small provinces on the borders of the Caspian Sea broke away from the Empire. The districts around Bagdad did the same, so that there remained nothing for the Caliphs beyond the city itself. The sovereign had become a laughing-stock in the hands of the Emir-el-Omra, or rather of the Turkish troops who set up one of their officers as Emir. One of the latter condemned Al Mouttaki to death, accusing him of having intrigued against him (944), and proclaimed in his place Al Moustakfi.

[1] Quatremère, op. cit.

for the use of a barbarous people, it was—and it remains—incapable of adapting itself to civilization. Wherever it has dominated, it has broken the impulse towards progress and checked the evolution of society.

CHAPTER X

Causes of the dismemberment of the Musulman Empire—The chief is the inability of the Arabs to govern—The history of the Caliphs in Spain is identical with that of the Caliphs at Damascus and at Bagdad : the same causes of ephemeral grandeur, the same causes of decay—There was no Arab civilization in Spain, but merely a revival of Latin civilization—This was developed behind a Musulman façade, and in spite of the Musulmans—The monuments attributed to the Arabs are the work of Spanish architects.

THE principal cause of the collapse of the power of the Arabs was their inability to administer their conquests. The secret of the success of the Greek and Roman conquerors lay in the fact that they possessed in their own countries a perfectly organized system of administration, which they had only to apply to the subject peoples with certain modifications to adapt it to their manners and customs. They thus brought to the vanquished a régime of order, bringing with it a prosperity that caused the latter to forget the brutalities of conquest.

The Arabs were not in possession of any such organization, they had not even a State; for the nomad tribes lived in freedom, obeying no authority, no directing power, no administration; theirs was, in fact, a régime of anarchy.

When the successors of Mahomet realized their conquests, they were obliged, in the absence of any Arab organization, to adopt that which they found in existence in the conquered provinces; and they could

only carry it on by the help of the people they had conquered. Their political inferiority was thus evident from the first day and inevitably diminished their prestige. Finally, the Musulman religion, conceived as it was for the use of a collectivity of nomads, was with difficulty adapted to the manners and customs of sedentary nations whose mentality and necessities were quite different. Thus, as was inevitable, it was not long before there were collisions of sentiment and wounded feelings on both sides. The various peoples, stupefied at first by the impetuosity of the Arab onrush, soon recovered their self-possession and tried to regain their independence.

But the Arabs, intoxicated by their success, took reprisals with such "frightfulness" that the conquered peoples resigned themselves in terror to their servitude. The Arabs, then believing that they were safe from any further danger, tasted the joy of living. In contact with the old Greco-Syrian and Greco-Persian civilizations they became softened and lost their warlike qualities, so utterly that the Caliphs had to enrol foreign troops to ensure the defence of the Empire.

As soon as the subject nations became aware of this enfeeblement, they took up once more their projects of independence. Several causes urged them to this course :

1. Regional nationalism, naturally exasperated by the farce of foreign domination, and the desire of the people to be governed by men of their own language and mentality.

2. The utter incapacity of the governing Arabs, an incapacity which prevented them from improving the administration of the conquered provinces and

compelled them to wink at the exactions of foreign officials.

3. The desire to get out of paying the tribute. In the subject provinces, every individual paid taxes, raised in the case of non-Musulmans, and reduced for the converted. These taxes were largely increased by the corruption of the collectors. The money squeezed out of the vanquished served to enrich the Arab governors; the surplus went to Damascus or Bagdad to maintain the luxury of the Caliphs, so that the Musulman domination appeared as an exploitation of the conquered nations for the benefit of the Arabs.

4. The dissensions which divided the conquerors. The Alides intrigued in Persia, the Ommeyads in Syria, in Spain, and in the Moghreb, the Old Musulmans in Irak. All these rivals, eager to injure one another, sought to recruit partisans among the non-Arabs, and this propaganda could only serve to impair unity and to increase the spirit of insubordination.

5. The ambition of the governors. As part of the bad organization of the Arab Empire, the provincial governors were allowed a measure of independence that made them the equals of the Caliph in their own province. They collected the taxes without any control; they recruited the troops necessary for their defence; this liberty led the ambitious by imperceptible degrees to revolt against the central power.

6. The exasperating rigour of the fanatics. In Islam there have always been rigid defenders of the Koranic dogma; these fanatics triumphed in the second century, when they obtained the immutable fixation of their doctrine. From that time onward

they busied themselves in imposing their ideas and behaved with so little moderation that they became intolerable.

These diverse causes were not always in operation at the same time; according to circumstances and places, it was now one and now another that was in the ascendant. In one province it would be the spirit of nationalism that led to revolt; in another it would be the desire to avoid the payment of taxes; or again, it might be rivalries among the Arabs; or perhaps the ambition of a governor or of some military leader; but in every case, one of these causes was found to be at the root of the movement for emancipation.

Thus in Spain, schism was provoked by hostility to the Abbassides. The superior officers of the army, Arab or Berber, were the protégés of the Ommeyads; so that on the coming of the Abbassides, anxiety to preserve their privileges led them to revolt. Two of these leaders, Somaïl and Yusuf, exercised power in the absence of a sovereign. The latter was not long in presenting himself.

An Ommeyad, Abd-er-Rahman, a descendant of the Caliph Hashem who, after incredible adventures, had escaped the massacres ordered by Abul-Abbas-es-Saffa and had taken refuge in Africa, crossed over to Spain.[1] Received with enthusiasm by the partisans of the Ommeyads, he had himself proclaimed Caliph, after getting rid of Yusuf and Somaïl who had attempted to oppose his intentions (756).

This was the beginning of the Caliphate in Spain, of which the history was very much the same as that of the Caliphates of Damascus and Bagdad. There were the same causes of grandeur and the same reasons for decay. As in Syria and in Mesopotamia,

[1] Dozy. op. cit. p. 299, t. i.

the Arabs found in Spain an advanced civilization, a reflection of that of Rome; and being quite without culture themselves, they fell under the influence of the people of the country, imitated their customs, and adopted their vicious habits. Ignorant of the arts of administration and government, they surrounded themselves with Syrians, Berbers, and Spaniards, converts to Islam, who exercised authority on their behalf. These new Musulmans, brought up in Latin traditions, revived, in spite of their barbarous conquerors, the fire of Latin genius. In contact with a refined society, the Arabs became corrupted, lost their warlike qualities, and were no longer in a position to maintain order. Power slipped from their hands. The history of Cordova is a repetition of that of Damascus and Bagdad, and furnishes fresh proof of the incapacity of the Arabs for government.

Abd-er-Rahman I. (756-787) had the qualities of the Ommeyads, and their defects: bravery, pride, generosity, perfidy, cold-blooded cruelty, and sensuality. His court rivalled that of Bagdad[1] in its pomp. He was in addition a man of refinement, with literary pretensions. After having caused one of his old friends to be assassinated, he would go and dream in his gardens at Cordova; and there, under the shade of the palms and orange trees, he would compose sentimental poems like the following:

"Beautiful palm, thou art, like myself, a stranger in these parts; but the winds brush thy fronds with their soft caress; thy roots find a hospitable soil and thy leafy crown expands in a pure air. Ah! thou would'st weep, even as I weep, could'st thou feel the troubles that prey upon me! Thou hast no fear of

[1] De Marles, "Hist. de la conquête de l'Espagne par les Arabes."

fate, whilst I am exposed to its buffets. When a cruel destiny and the vengeance of the Abbasside drove me into exile from the country of my birth, many times did I shed tears under the shade of palms watered by the Euphrates; but alas! the trees and the river have forgotten me, and thou, beautiful palm, thou dost not lament justice!"[1]

Abd-er-Rahman had a difficult beginning: the chiefs, Arab and Berber, who had cut themselves adrift from the Empire in order to be free, entered into league against him. Some he bought over, others he had killed, and in the end he remained undisputed master. At his death, he left to his son, Hashem I. (787-795), a situation practically clear of difficulties.

The new Caliph bore little resemblance to his father. Bigoted to excess, he was completely in the hands of religious personages, notably of the great Medinan doctor, Malik, one of the four orthodox interpreters of the Koran. These fanatical doctrinaires sought to impose their ideas upon the people, and set to work with a brutality that turned all consciences against them.[2]

The Spanish nation was conquered only in appearance; the lower class alone, who had obtained advantages by being converted to Islam, accepted Arab domination without excessive animosity; but the aristocracy, robbed of their lands, the Christian priests reduced to a miserable condition, the Visigoths fallen from power, all detested the invader and preached revolt. The want of tact on the part of the fakis only added fuel to their hatred.

Thus it happened that Hashem's successor,

[1] Ibn Adhari, "Hist. de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne."
[2] Akhbar Medjmoua.

El-Hakem (795-821) had to suppress several revolts. Wishing to counteract the ill-timed zeal of the fakis, he incurred their animosity and had to baffle their intrigues. Whether against them or against the populace he employed violent methods: fire, the sword, and poison; he was a rough fighter, unrestrained by any scruples: witness this poem that he wrote for his son before his death:[1]

"As a tailor uses his needle to sew together pieces of stuff, so have I used my sword to re-unite my separated provinces; for, since the age when I began to think, nothing disgusted me so much as the dismemberment of the Empire. Ask to-day on my frontiers if there is any part of it in the enemy's power; they will tell you No; but if they say Yes, I will fly there clad in my cuirass with my good sword in my fist. Ask too if the skulls of my rebel subjects, which, like colocynth apples split in two, bestrew the plain and whiten in the sun's rays; they will tell you that I have smitten them without giving them any peace. Stricken with terror the insurgents fled to escape death; but I, always at my post, I laughed at death. If I have spared neither the women nor their children, it is because they have threatened my family; the man who cannot avenge outrages offered to his family has no feeling of honour and everybody despises him. When we had finished exchanging sword-strokes, I forced them to drink a deadly poison; but have I done any more than pay the debt that they had forced me to incur to them? Of a truth, if they have found death, it is because their destiny willed it thus. I leave you, then, my provinces pacified, O my son! They are like a bed on which thou canst sleep in

[1] El-Maqqari, 'Analecta sur l'hist. d'Espagne," trad. Dozy.

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tranquillity, for I have taken care that no rebel shall trouble thy slumbers.'"[1]

El Hakem's successor, his son, Abd-er-Rahman II., advised by the Syrians and Spaniards of his court, wished to rival in splendour the Caliphs of Bagdad. He lived the life of an Epicurean, solely preoccupied with tasting the delights of existence, leaving the cares of power to his favourites. Of these, one was a faki, the Berber Yahia, a pupil of the celebrated Malik, a fierce sectary, a wild tribune, who busied himself chiefly with religious questions; another was a Persian musician, a sort of adventurer, of an incredible verbosity and self-confidence, who set the fashion; another, an Islamized Spaniard, the eunuch Nasr, deceitful and cruel, with all the hatred of a renegade for the Christians; finally, there was the Sultana Taroub, an intriguing woman, devoured by a thirst for gold, who took advantage of the Caliph's infatuation for her to pile up wealth.[2]

The Musulman fanatics, protected by Yahia and the eunuch Nasr, committed such excesses of zeal that they aroused a movement of revolt among the Christians. As in the heroic times of the Church, there was no dearth of fanatical devotees who sought martyrdom and who, there being no idols to destroy, insulted the Musulman magistrates. A Christian priest named Prefectus, having insulted a Cadi, was put to torture. Before dying, he predicted the death of the eunuch Nasr, his executioner. But, by a curious coincidence, Nasr had been commissioned by Taroub, the favourite, to poison the Caliph. The Caliph, warned by some suspicions, compelled him to drink the fatal cup, so that the eunuch died the very

[1] Ibn-Adhari, "Hist de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne," trad. Dozy, t. ii., p. 85.
[2] Makkari, "Ibn Khalikan."

next day after Prefectus suffered; the Christians did not fail to attribute this end to the curse of the martyr, whom they considered as a saint. The example of Prefectus was followed by numbers of the faithful, who by their sacrifice reawakened the Christian sentiments of the masses. Most serious troubles resulted from these events.

Abd-er-Rahman II. having died in the midst of all this, his son, Mohammed (852-886), found himself at grips with the gravest difficulties; first from the intrigues of Taroub, who wanted to raise one of her own children to power, and secondly from the exasperation of the Christians. Outbreaks took place on all sides; he drowned them in blood; at Toledo, eight thousand Christians were massacred; churches were destroyed, and the Musulman religion was declared obligatory.[1]

These persecutions merely increased the zeal of the faithful. Eulogius, the principal head of the Church, publicly insulted Mahomet and Islam in order to earn martyrdom, and was executed in 859. To form any idea of the exaltation of the Christians, it is necessary to read the criticisms passed upon Islam by the authors of the time:

"This adversary of our Saviour," said a monk speaking of Mahomet, "has consecrated the sixth day of the week—which, because of the passion of our Lord, should be a day of grief and fasting—this day he has devoted to eating and drinking and debauchery. Christ exhorted his disciples to chastity; this man has preached coarse delights, unclean pleasures, incest, to his followers.

"Christ preached marriage—but he, divorce.

[1] Ibn Adhari.

Christ recommended fasting and sobriety—but he, feasting and the pleasures of the table."[1]

The mountaineers of Andalusia, worked up by the priests, renounced Islam which had been forced upon them, and under the leadership of a certain Ibn-Hafçoun, rose to recover their independence. By a few lucky strokes, they caused serious losses among the Musulman troops.

El Mondhir (886-888), on his way to carry on the struggle with the rebels, was poisoned by his brother, Abd'Allah, who seized power.

Abd'Allah (888-912), was a man of tortuous policy. His character presents a singular mixture of perfidy and devotion. Entirely without scruple although a bigot, he violated the most solemn engagements, committed the worst crimes, and yet at the same time was subject to fits of religious fervour; witness the following melancholy poem, composed in a period of remorse:

"All the things of this world are but ephemera; there is nothing stable here below. Make haste, then, sinful man, to bid adieu to all mundane vanities, and become a true believer. In a little while, though wilt be in thy tomb, and damp earth will be cast upon thy face, but lately so beautiful. Apply thyself solely to thy religious duties; give thyself up to devotion, and try to propitiate the Lord of heaven."[2]

Alarmed by the revolts which were breaking out on all sides, Abd'Allah made a truce first with Ibn-Hafçoun; but this step, having produced an

[1] Alvaro, "Indiculus luminosus."
[2] Ibn Adhari.

effect contrary to his expectations, he resumed the struggle, with varying fortunes.

His grandson, Abd-er-Rahman III., at the age of twenty-two, succeeded him (912-961). He was a sovereign of rare energy and great courage, probably the greatest of the Caliphs of Spain.

He assumed command of the Musulman troops in person and pacified the country in a few months. He even extended his influence into Africa. He reorganized the public treasury, which had been emptied by his predecessors, and caused the taxes to be collected regularly so that they produced annually a total exceeding six million pieces of gold; of this he devoted one third to current expenses, another third to embellishments, and the remaining third he placed in reserve. In 951, he had in his coffers more than twenty million pieces of gold. A wise and tactful administration caused the old quarrels between Christians and Musulmans to be forgotten, and brought back prosperity once more. Commerce developed to such an extent that the customs duties inward and outward were sufficient to meet the public expenditure. His reign was for Musulman Spain a period of unquestionable splendour.[1] And yet, Abd-er-Rahman was not happy: having caused one of his sons to be executed for plotting against him, he was so tortured by remorse that it hastened his end. He expressed his grief in the following verses, which were found after his death:

"Fifty years have gone by since I became Caliph: wealth, power, pleasure—I have enjoyed them all, I have exhausted them all. Rival Kings respect me, fear me, and envy me. All that a man could desire, that has Heaven granted me. Ah! well, in this long

[1] Dozy, t. ii., p. 350.

spell of apparent happiness, I have counted up the days when I have been really happy, and I have found them to amount to fourteen. Mortals, form a just estimate of power, of the world, and of life."[1]

The very remarkable record of work accomplished by Abd-er-Rahman III. was carried on by his son, El Hakem II. (961-976), who, having imposed peace on the neighbouring Christian princes, administered the finances of the Empire with prudence. He made such economies in sumptuary expenditure that he was able to reduce taxation. Under the advice of Islamized Spaniards of his court, he protected art and letters as no other Caliph had done before him. Keen to educate himself, he attained a degree of intellectual culture very rare at that time. He had a passion for rare and valuable books, and kept a number of scribes in the principal towns of Islam—Bagdad, Damascus, Cairo, and Alexandria, whose business it was to make copies of any remarkable works. His library at Cordova contained over four hundred thousand volumes. In order to spread the advantages of education and the blessings of religion, he created numerous primary schools and many superior colleges, where selected professors taught grammar, rhetoric, and even philosophy, after Aristotle.[2] The University of Cordova, reorganized under his care, became celebrated; the liberality of the Caliph drew to it the most renowned doctors of the Musulman world: Abu-Ali-Kali, of Bagdad, taught there everything connected with the ancient Arabs, their history, their proverbs, their language, and their poetry. These lessons were subsequently collected and published under the title of *Amali* or

[1] Ibn Adhari.
[2] Ibn-Khaldoun. "Prolegomena."

lectures.[1] Ibn al Koutia taught grammar. Abu-Bekr ibn Moawia, of the Koreich, dealt with the traditions relating to Mahomet.[2] Thousands of students flocked from all parts of the kingdom to follow the teaching of these illustrious masters.

From among the young students of this University there emerged the man who was to give to the power of the Caliphs its greatest expression of might and splendour, but who was at the same time to ruin it by his ambition: Abu-Amir Mohammed, better known as Al Manzor (the victorious). Sprung from a middle-class family, but devoid of scruples and anxious only to succeed, he raised himself by means of skilful intrigue to the highest offices. Beginning as a poor public writer, then secretary to the Cadi of Cordova, he was recommended to the Caliph's favourite Sultana, Sobh (Aurora), who engaged him as administrator of her eldest son's estates, the child being then five years old.[3] Thanks to the Sultana's interest, whose lover he is said to have been, he was appointed inspector of the Mint, an important post, which by placing at his disposal, almost without check, considerable sums, enabled him to form a following of devoted partisans. Sent into Mauretania to supervise the conduct of the Caliph's generals, he succeeded by tact and discretion in winning the friendship of both officers and men. On his return, El Hakem II., feeling himself seriously ill, made him major-domo to his son, Hashem, who was still too young to wield power.

On Hakem's death, Abu-Amir Mohammed, ridding himself very cleverly of the personages who might stand in his way, proceeded, with the con-

[1] Ibn-Khaldoun, trad. Slane.
[2] Ibn-Adhari.
[3] Cardonne, "Hist. de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne."

nivance of Sultana Sobh, to relegate Hashem II. to the women of the harem, and himself assumed power.[1] After a few military successes over the Christian princes of the neighbouring States, he took the title of Al Manzor, the victorious, and then that of Malik Karim, the magnanimous king. Having fallen out with Sultana Sobh and threatened with dismissal, he extorted from Hashem II. a declaration handing over to himself the conduct of affairs. His ambition was his ruin. In order to maintain his prestige and popularity, he engaged in a ruinous war with the Christian States. Defeated at Kalat Annozer by a coalition of the princes, and wounded in the course of the action, his pride was so mortified that he made no struggle against death (1002).[2]

Hashem II. might have taken advantage of this opportunity to resume power; but he did nothing. Dividing his time between the women of his harem and religious exercises, he allowed Abd-el-Malik, the son of Al Manzor, to govern in his place. But the new regent had not the qualities of his father. This was the beginning of the downfall of the Musulman Empire in Spain; the causes of its dissolution can already be discerned:

The absence of any national unity. The conquerors, drowned as they were in the flood of a hostile population who, though outwardly converted to Islam, had preserved their own mentality, their customs, and the sentiment of nationality, formed a minority incapable of exercising any directive influence. The Arabs were, in fact, merely encamped in the countries they had hastily conquered; their occupation was precarious; whilst their

[1] Ibn-Adhari.
[2] Dozy, "Hist. des Musulmans d'Espagne."

Semitic mentality kept them outside the pale of Latin civilization.

The subject population was divided against itself; the Islamized Spaniards lived on bad terms with the Christians, who regarded them as renegades; the Berbers, who formed the great bulk of the army, hated both Arabs and Spaniards alike, and were only concerned to live at the expense of either one or the other. The Caliph, kept apart from the people, was powerless to impose his will. A court composed of adventurers and servile courtiers, in haste to get rich, isolated him from the masses. And then, in addition, there was the constant menace of the neighbouring Christian States, which had become the refuge of all the malcontents, of all those who had been robbed, of all those who had refused to make any sort of compromise with the conqueror and had preferred to abandon their property rather than deny their faith. This menace kept alive in the hearts of the vanquished the hope of revenge, in the belief that some day the invader would be driven out.

This fragile structure had been kept together after a fashion by energetic rulers having at their disposition an irresistible military force; but as soon as power fell into the hands of incapable Caliphs, the hostile elements, who had been kept together by force, withdrew from their compulsory alliance, and anarchy took the place of order.

Abd-el-Malik had been barely tolerated. The Spanish people, with a vague consciousness of their dignity, bore with increasing impatience the rule of a parvenu without any real authority. The situation was aggravated after the death of Abd-el-Malik, when his brother, Abd-er-Rahman wanted to take his place. The hatred which had long been accumu-

lating against this family of parasites broke loose. As the imbecile, Hashem II., did not intervene, various pretenders came forward, notably a certain Mohammed, in whose favour the Caliph abdicated, and who took the surname of El-Mahdi Billah.[1]

This meant civil war and anarchy. Abd-er-Rahman was murdered by the populace; El-Mahdi put Hashem II. into close confinement and gave out that he was dead, which did not improve the situation. A grandson of Abd-er-Rahman III., Soleiman, was proclaimed Caliph. The palace mercenaries, under the lead of a certain Wadhih, killed El Mahdi, under the pretext of restoring Hashem II., they then killed Wadhih who was abusing his power.

Soleiman took Cordova; and when he reproached Hashem II. with having abdicated in favour of his rival Mohammed, the Caliph replied, joining his hands: "Alas! you know I have no will; I do what they tell me! But spare me, I beseech you, for I declare again that I abdicate, and I appoint you my successor."[2] This language shows the depth of cowardice into which Hashem had fallen.

In the provinces the Berber leaders revolted; the populace betook themselves to pillage; adventurers arose on all sides to foment these troubles. There were several Caliphs attempting to reign at the same time: Ali Ibn Hamoud; then a grandson of Abd-er-Rahman III., Abd-er-Rahman IV. (1016); then Kassim (1023); then a son of Abd-er-Rahman IV., Abd-er-Rahman V. (1023); then an Ommeyad, Mohammed II. al Mostakfi (1024); then Yahia, son of Ali Ibn Hammoud (1025); then Hashem III. al Motamid, elder brother of Abd-er-Rahman V. (1026-1029), a *roi fainéant* who passed his life at table,

[1] De Marles, "Hist. de la conquête de l'Espagne par les Arabes."
[2] Ibn-Adhari.

between actors and dancing-girls. Driven from power, this ne'er-do-weel who cared only for wines, flowers, and truffles, was replaced by a sort of Senate, made up of Viziers and other influential personages (1029).[1]

Each province and every town of importance became a separate State; Cordova fell from its rank as the capital and was supplanted by Seville, where the executive power had been entrusted to the Cadi, Abul-Kassim Mohammed, of the family of the Beni-Abbad or Abbadites. To put an end to these rivalries and re-establish some sort of order, he made use of a stratagem. He had found, in the person of a mat-weaver of Calatrava, the living double of Hashem II., and he claimed that the Caliph was not dead, that he had found him in a prison; and he gave the outward signs of power to this mat-weaver, reserving the real governing power to himself (1035).[2]

His son, Abbad (1042), succeeded him as hadjib or prime minister to the so-called Hashem II. Suspicious, corrupt, treacherous, given up to drunkenness, tyrannical, and cruel, this man seemed to combine in his own person every possible defect. He got rid of the pseudo-Caliph and reigned under the name of Abbad II. in the midst of general anarchy.

His son, Al Motamid (1069), less corrupt, tried to restore order; but his attempts were unfortunate; and in despair he entered into an alliance with Alphonse V. (1080). The latter, in case of success, reserved for himself Toledo, leaving to his ally Badajoz, Granada, and Almeria. This understanding was specially favourable to the Christian King in giving him possession of Toledo and thus delivering to the Spaniards all the fortresses on their side of the

[1] Dozy, op. cit.
[2] Ibn-Adhari.

avids had lost their warlike qualities through their residence in Spain; whilst the Spaniards, who had been converted, detested their tyrants more than ever. Alphonse of Arragon made several successful incursions into Andalusia (1125); Alphonso VII. of Castile took Xeres (1133); Roger Guiscar took possession of Candia and Sicily, and his son conquered the islands of the coast (1125-1143).

The Almoravids having lost all prestige, a certain Mohammed ben Abd'Allah gave himself out as the Mahdi, the Messiah who was to regenerate Islam; and from Africa, where he had just founded the dynasty of the Almohades, he crossed over into Spain (1120-1130). His successor, Abd-el-Moumen (1130-1160), accomplished the conquest of Africa, and then fought in Spain against the Christian princes. His son, Yousouf (1172-1184), carried on the war with alternating success and failure, and his successor, Yacoub, took up the holy war against the Christians (1184). He took Calatrava, Toledo, and Salamanca.[1]

The accession of the Almohades was the result of the movement of reaction against the fanaticism of the Almoravids. Thanks to the liberal spirit of the members of this dynasty, civilization which had been stifled by bigoted ignorance, shone with a new brilliancy by the help of Islamized Spaniards. The same fact may be noted throughout the whole course of Musulman history: namely, that whenever the religious party is in the ascendant, and the Caliph is amenable to its suggestions, civilization is stifled and there is a retrogression of the subject peoples towards barbarism. On the other hand, there is an expansion of civilization as soon as the subject people are able, thanks to the administration of a tolerant prince, to

[1] De Marles, op. cit.

develop freely their national qualities. When Islam triumphs, it is the Arab spirit that dominates, that is to say a spirit poor in imagination, incapable of invention, and which, being quite unable to conceive anything beyond what it perceives directly, observes scrupulously, fanatically, the letter of the sacred texts. When the religious party ceases to wield power, the subject people, left free to think and act, escape from the narrow pillory of Islamic dogma and obey the inspirations of their own genius. It is a further proof of the deadly influence of Islam. The expansion of civilization that was produced in Spain under the tolerant administration of the Almohades, following the fanatical tutelage of the Almoravids, shows once more the correctness of this view.

The reign of Yacoub marks a renaissance of Latin civilization. *Belles lettres*, which had been disdained by the coarse and devout Africans, were once more held in honour; poets and men of science were understood and appreciated, and sumptuous monuments on every side bore witness to the wealth and liberality of the Almohades.

Mohammed - el - Nasr (1205), who succeeded Yacoub, at first followed his example, but moved by ambition he had dreams of military glory and wished to undertake expeditions against the Christians. In 1205 he took the Balearic Isles, and was so intoxicated by this success that he lost all prudence, and in 1210 invaded the neighbouring Christian States.[1]

This was a blunder: for Islam no longer had at its disposal armed forces adequate for the realization of conquests. The Berber armies, corrupted by contact with Latin civilization, had lost their powers of endurance and their bravery and had become nothing

[1] Sedillot, "Hist. des Arabes."

Tagus, and giving them a solid base of operations for the future.[1]

The Arabs, feeling their situation precarious, appealed to the Almoravid Yousef ben Tafsin, established in Morocco, whose warlike successes and great qualities centred upon him the hopes of the Musulman world. They realized that in doing this they were merely changing masters; but, as Al Motamid expressed it, they would rather be camel-drivers in Africa than swineherds in Castile.

Yousef crossed over into Spain (1086) and obtained a first success over the Christians; he was about to follow this up when the death of his son compelled him to return to Morocco. Left to himself, Al Motamid sustained severe reverses; the Christians, led by chiefs of the highest courage, such as the famous Rodrigo de Campeador (The Cid), took possession of the province of Murcia (1087).

At the request of Al Motamid, Yousef returned to Spain, where, taking advantage of the rivalries of the Arab leaders and of the complaisance of the Berber chiefs, he carved out for himself a State in the south of the peninsula, where his authority was exercised without opposition (1090-1094). There remained only one independent Musulman State, that of Saragossa, where Mostaïn, of the family of the Beni-Hamed, ruled. On his death, Saragossa was handed over to the Almoravids (1110).

Yousef owed his success to the fakis who had carried on an active propaganda on his behalf and who had legalized his usurpation by religious texts. Himself very devout, he rewarded them by according them the most extensive privileges. It was a reign of narrow fanaticism and of religious oppression carried

[1] De Marles, op. cit.

on by Islamized Berbers who scrupulously observed the letter of the Islamic dogma and applied the commandments of the Koran with inflexible rigour. This régime was prolonged under Yousef's successors, Ali and Teshoufin, up to 1143.

The intellectual culture, developed by Islamized Spaniards under the patronage of liberal-minded Caliphs, was annihilated. The poets had to exclude every licentious expression, every profane metaphor from their writings, and to limit themselves to extolling the benefits of Islam; the philosophers had to confine themselves to a servile imitation of the orthodox writers; men of science were obliged to desist from researches which carried them beyond the narrow borders of dogma. Even Ghazzali, the great Musulman theologian, whose works had been called *the proof of Islamism*, was ranked among the ungodly. It was the destruction of all thinking, the return to barbarism. Naturally, the Christians and Jews were persecuted with the utmost rigour. For fifty years Musulman Spain lived under the rough discipline of ignorant and bigoted sectaries who set themselves the task of killing every tendency towards progress at its birth.[1]

Exasperated by this unbearable tyranny, the people finally rose against the bigots. They were aided in their rebellion by the Arab chiefs, who wished to free themselves, and also by the neighbouring Christian States. It was the time when the enthusiasm that had aroused the great crusading movement was still vibrating. The Christian princes, taking advantage of the hostility of the people against their Musulman oppressors, engaged in the struggle. The moment was favourable. The Berber Almor-

[1] Dozy, op. cit.

in response to the sentiment of nationalism, revolted as soon as he felt himself strong enough and drove out the invader.

The expansion of civilization, which was produced in Spain under the reign of tolerant Caliphs, was due entirely to Islamized Spaniards, that is to say, to Latins who, in spite of their conversion, had kept intact their mentality and their genius. Even the Arab literature of Spain shows the effect of Latin influence.[1] Within the limits allowed him by the law of Islam, the conquering barbarian has submitted to the impress of the conquered, more civilized than himself. As everywhere else, the Arab has copied, but has invented nothing. The monuments of Cordova, of Seville, and of Granada, are the work of Spanish architects. The Arab gave the orders, but no instructions. The Caliph said: "I want a palace," but he could never find any Arab capable of drawing up the necessary plans, and had to entrust this duty to Islamized Spaniards; just as at Damascus and at Bagdad, it was Syrian and Greek architects who erected the monuments wrongly attributed to the Arabs.

[1] Dozy, op. cit.

CHAPTER XI

Arab decadence in Persia, Mesopotamia, and Egypt—The provinces, relapsed into barbarism temporarily under Arab dominion, are re-born into civilization as soon as they are able to free themselves—General causes of the decay of the Arab Empire : Political nullity—Absence of creative genius—Absence of discipline—Bad administration—No national unity—The Arab could only govern with the collaboration of foreigners—Secondary causes : Religion, the vehicle of Arab thought—Too great a diversity among the conquered peoples—Despotic power of the prince—Servile position of women—The Islamization of the subject peoples raised them to the level of the conqueror and allowed them to submerge him—Mixed marriages—Negro influence—Diminution of the Imperial revenues—The mercenaries.

IT would be wearisome to follow through all its details the history of the provinces brought into subjection to the Arabs. It may be briefly summarized. The same causes having produced everywhere the same effects, the various countries conquered by the Arabs followed the example of Spain and worked for the dismemberment of the Empire. In Persia, in Mesopotamia and in Egypt, it was above all nationalist sentiments. awakened by foreign domination and strengthened by religious persecution, that drove the people to revolt.[1]

This movement towards independence reveals a remarkable fact, already noted in the case of Spain : the provinces fallen into barbarism under the Arab

[1] Th. Noeldeke, "Hist. des Perses et des Arabes au temps de Sassanides."

more than hordes of undisciplined old soldiers. On the other hand, the Christians, fired by religious zeal, were possessed of formidable armies.

As soon as the Musulmans made their attack, Pope Innocent III. preached a crusade and sixty thousand foreign volunteers crossed the Pyrenees in response to his appeal and joined forces with the Spanish Christians. A great battle fought in the plains of Tolosa ended in the defeat of the Musulmans (1212). The Christians, encouraged by this success, followed it up by a succession of victories. The Islamized Spaniards, who had only remained quiet from fear of reprisals, now rose. The Arab and Berber leaders, wishing to be free, followed their example, and there ensued a fresh period of anarchy, which was fatal to the Almohades. The successors of Mohammed-el-Nasr, Abu Yacoub, and Almamun tried in vain to stem the disorganization of the Empire. The Christians continued their successful progress until in 1282 the dominion of the Almohades in Spain was totally destroyed.

Of the Musulman States there remained only Granada whose sovereign, Mohammed al-Hammar, was able to make a show of resistance. Granada had become the refuge of those Musulmans who could not submit to a foreign yoke. Threatened on all sides, they united together and thus enabled the kingdom of Granada to subsist for more than two centuries (1288-1492); but its fall was fated. El-Zagal, one of the successors of Mohammed al-Hammar, capitulated in 1492.[1]

That was the end of Islam in Spain. What had happened elsewhere happened again in Spain: the Arabs transplanted into the country were, so to

[1] Dozy, " Hist. des Musulmans d'Espagne."

speak, poisoned by Latin civilization. It is indeed notable that the Arab has never been able to profit by the intellectual or scientific achievements of other nations; he has contracted their defects, but he has shown himself incapable of assimilating any of their good qualities. The reason of this is simple. The law, of religious inspiration, which rules tyrannically every act of a Musulman, and which has been based upon Arab customs, that is to say, the customs of a barbarous people, does not expressly condemn the grosser forms of pleasure; contrary to Christianity, Islam does not preach continence nor the contempt of sex. With the exception of the prohibition of fermented liquors, it leaves the faithful complete liberty in all that concerns material enjoyments. Mahomet boasted of his love of perfumes, of women, and flowers. But the law of Islam fixes in a rigid and unchangeable way the intellectual limits that the Musulman cannot pass without denying his faith. It has thus prevented those who accept it from benefiting by the progress of civilization realized by other nations, without defending them against the vices of these same nations. The consequence has been that whilst remaining intellectually barbarians, the followers of the religion of Islam have assimilated the vices of societies refined by an ancient civilization.

In Spain, the Arab became weakened by contact with Latin culture. The man of war became effeminate. Being quite unable, from his want of intellectual equipment, to exert any influence over the mentality of the newly converted, he was content to impose himself by force; and thus power slipped from his hands as soon as a more easy life and the abuse of material pleasures had caused him to lose his qualities of vigour and endurance. The vanquished,

yoke, returned to civilization as soon as they had, by their emancipation, recovered liberty of thought and action. This is a striking proof of the desolating influence exercised by the Arabs. As soon as the Musulman doctrine triumphs, there is intellectual paralysis of the people upon whom it is imposed; as soon as this doctrine suffers an eclipse, the people, left to the free inspiration of their genius, escape from barbarism and return to civilization. The history of every province in revolt against Arab authority illustrates this proposition.

From 814, Khorassan, given by Caliph Al-Mamun to one of his generals, Thaher, in reward for his services, became independent. Thaher, a man of war, troubled himself little about religious doctrines; he was a liberal-minded man, and as such allowed his subjects complete liberty of conscience. They soon recovered by favour of this tolerance and developed their national genius; we find an immediate renewal of civilization. Men of science and of letters came in considerable numbers and set themselves to work; there has been preserved an observation of the autumnal equinox of 851 made at Nichabor, the capital of Khorassan, with a great armillary sphere reading to minutes.[1]

In 864, Tabaristan, a small province on the borders of the Caspian Sea, freed itself by the help of Has an ben Zaïd, one of the Alides.

In 870, a Persian, Yacoub-es-Soffar, raised the standard of revolt in Seijestan, then, seizing Khorassan and Tabaristan, he formed a considerable kingdom. His accession to power was the result of a reaction of Persian nationalism against the Arab spirit, a nationalism coloured by religion, for Persia in accept-

[1] Sedillot, "Hist. des Arabes."

ing Islam had so adapted it to her own genius that she had changed the doctrine in some respects. The dynasty of the Soffarides, of which Yacoub was the founder, was continued later by that of the Samanides, also Persian. Here again we may note an intellectual renaissance. The people of Persia, of a very advanced civilization, needed but a little liberty to enable them to emerge from Arab barbarism.

Between 930 and 940, Djezireh, then Armenia and Georgia freed themselves from Arab tutelage. But the most extended movement broke out in central Persia, where the people in obedience to national feeling raised to power a family of Deilimite origin, the Bouides. Here again, as soon as the Arab domination came to an end, there was a renewal of civilization. A prince of this dynasty, Adhab-ed-Doulah, took in hand great works of general utility; engineers were directed to canalize the river Bendemir near Shiraz. They succeeded in preventing the inundations which had periodically destroyed cultivation, and handed over to commerce a new means of communication. Science and letters were held in honour. This brilliant period was prolonged to 1060, until the coming of the Seljuks.

The latter, although barbarians, favoured civilization, because, being Musulmans only in name, they showed themselves tolerant in their rule. One of the successors of Togrul-Beg, the founder of the dynasty, Djebel-ed-Din Malek-Shah (1072-1092) contributed by a wise administration to the development of general prosperity. This barbarian protected learned men and writers, and succeeded in constituting a vast empire which included the greater part of Persia, the Greek territories as far as the Bosphorus, Djezireh and Syria. But his sons, impelled

by ambition, embarked on civil war which ruined this vast empire and led to its dismemberment.

In 877, a freed Turkish mercenary, Ahmed ben Thoulon, to whom Caliph Al Motamid had entrusted the government of Egypt and Syria, declared himself independent of the Empire. His motive was ambition, but he was aided by the people who were weary of Arab constraint. Once rid of the heavy hand of the Abbassides, the two provinces which had been almost ruined by the exactions of officials and by religious persecution, soon recovered their former prosperity. Ahmed ben Thoulon, who had only recently been converted to Islam, had but a very slight acquaintance with the subtleties of the faith; and being anxious for popularity, he displayed a liberal spirit, calmed the zeal of the fanatics, protected the arts and sciences, raised monuments with the help of Egyptian and Syrian architects, made roads, opened canals and set up markets.

His son, Khomarouiah (884), following his example, allowed complete liberty to the individual, surrounded himself with an elegant court, and distinguished himself by his prodigality. At the instigation of the learned men of the country, he had an immense menagerie built at Mesrah where wild animals of every sort were kept.

The Fatimites, who succeeded the Thoulonides, ruled as they had done with the assistance of the great local families.[1] Moez-Ledinilla (958-975), who was the first Fatimite Caliph of Egypt, and who founded El Kahira, and his successor Aziz-Billah (975-996), by their liberal administration, favoured the development of commerce, of industry, and agriculture; whilst by

[1] Makrizi, "Itiaz-ol-Hounafa."

their generous treatment they encouraged writers and savants. Ibn-Younes, the Egyptian, had his observatory, like the astronomers of Irak, and was able to compose his celebrated astronomical tables.[1] The prosperity of this province increased until the revenue from it alone was equal to what had formerly been collected by Haroun-al-Raschid from the whole extent of the Empire.

In spite of the folly of Hashem, a sort of Oriental Nero who distinguished himself by sadic excesses (996-1020); in spite of the incapacity of Dhaber (1020-1036); in spite of the disappointed ambitions of Abu-Tamin Mostanser (1036-1094), Egypt continued to be prosperous until 1171, when for a time she again fell under the dominion of the Abbassides. From 1171 to 1258, when the last Abbasside died, was a period of barbarism and anarchy further accentuated by the enterprises of the Christian Crusaders, which began in 1096.[2]

The Abbasside Caliphs, weakened by a life of debauchery, were too feeble to offer any effective opposition to the taking of Antioch (1098) or of Jerusalem (1099).

It was a Seljuk, Emad-ed-Din Zenghi, who had carved out for himself an independent kingdom between Djezireh and Irak el Arabi, who led the Musulmans against the Christians and arrested their advance.

His work was continued by his two sons, Sif-ed-Din and Nour-ed-Din. The latter, notably, took Damascus, then threatened by the Crusaders; whilst one of his lieutenants, Shirkuk, took Egypt in hand. Shirkuk's nephew, Salah-ed-Din, the Saladin of our

[1] Sedillot, op. cit.

[2] "Recueil des hist. orientaux des Croisades."

in existence in the lands they conquered, but they could never improve upon those forms, nor replace them by any other.

A homely illustration will explain our meaning. The intelligence of an Arab rises as high as the faculty of imitation. Put him on a motor-car or a locomotive engine, and after a certain time of apprenticeship, he will be able to drive it; but if the machine should get out of order, he will be quite incapable of repairing it, and still less could he make a new one.

In the same way, the Arab conqueror succeeding to civilized peoples such as the Persians or the Byzantines, has been able to take over their system of administration; he has even been compelled to adopt it, since he could not substitute for it any scheme of his own devising; he has been able to assure the working of the adopted system for a certain time; but as soon as circumstances called for some modifications, he has not been able to effect them, since he had no gift of invention or creative genius; and when the system got out of order for want of measures rendered necessary by new conditions, by the evolution of ideas and of manners, he could neither repair it nor replace it by any system of his own. The machine of government wore out rapidly and finally stopped running; and when it stopped, ruin followed.

In Northern Africa, the conquering Arab was unable to repair the barrages and other hydraulic works that had enabled the Romans to endow the country with unexampled agricultural prosperity. He made what use he could of them, so long as they lasted; but, when they fell into ruin, either by the ravages of time or by wanton destruction, the prosperity of the Moghreb collapsed, drought struck

the land with barrenness and the desert took the place of fields and orchards.

The Arab is no administrator. A careless nomad, accustomed to live from hand to mouth, submitting to the accidents of daily life without being able to foresee them, and never dreaming of providing against them, he is quite incapable of government. So true is this that the capital of the Empire has never been in Arabia; it was for a time in Syria, then in Mesopotamia, then in Spain, then in Egypt; that is to say, wherever the Caliphs found foreign collaborators with the talents necessary to make up for their own shortcomings. So long as these collaborators were strong enough to impose their will, behind the façade of Caliphal power, there was some appearance of government. But, when the conquering Arab, intoxicated by his successes or blinded by religious fanaticism, wanted to rule by himself, anarchy immediately succeeded to order and the whole structure went to pieces. At no period did the direction of the affairs of the Empire proceed from Arabia, so that there could never be any national power, any national ideal, national interest or national unity.

The various provinces were always split up by rivalries, because each one of them, in view of the inability of the Conqueror to impose discipline and directive, preserved its own particular ideals, its own ambitions, friendships and hatreds; so that the Arab Empire was never anything better than a mosaic of ill-assorted blocks without bond or cohesion.

The Arab is a barbarian. Up to the time of Mahomet, Arabia was inhabited by shepherds and robbers; there is no evidence of the existence of a society, of any collective organization or intellectual

chronicles, overthrew the Fatimites (1171).[1] On the death of Nour-ed-Din in 1174, he became the ruler of Egypt, of Syria, of Mesopotamia, and of Arabia. In 1185, his Empire extended from Tripoli, in Africa, to the Tigris, and from the Yemen to the Taurus mountains. He took from the Christians Acre, Ascalon and Jerusalem (1187). On his death, the ambition of his sons broke up this Empire; one of them took Egypt, another Damascus, and the third took Aleppo and Upper Syria. This was the dynasty of the Aioubites. The two former were dispossessed by their uncle Malk-Adhel-Sif-ed-Din, who reunited into one State Egypt and Lower Syria and took Tripoli from the Crusaders (1200-1218).

On his death there was a further dismemberment. In the thirteenth century, the Musulman Empire was no more than a cloud of small States wrangled over by the representatives of the different dynasties and the partisans of the various sects, of whom the most active at that time were the Ismailiens or Hachichin, who came to light in Persia about 840, under the inspiration of Mazdeism.

A new race of conquerors, the Mongols, now invaded Asia Minor and added to the general anarchy; after making themselves masters of Tartary and China, Genghis Khan and his successors fell upon the Musulman Empire (1258).[2] Egypt and Syria held out until 1517. Power passed finally out of the hands of the Arabs, who disappeared before more warlike conquerors—the Turks and the Mongols; they had no longer any political existence beyond the confines of the peninsula, and disappeared hence-

[1] Michaud, "Hist. des Croisades."
[2] Djouvaini, "Tarrikhi Djihan Kouchaï"; Rashid-ed-Din-Fadh' Allah, "Djami al-Tawarikh."

forward from the history of the nations of the Orient.

Having now reviewed the history of the Arab Empire from its origin down to its final collapse, it may not be beyond the bounds of possibility perhaps to unravel the causes of its decline and fall.

There were certain general causes, connected with the Arab temperament and mentality, and resulting from the natural shortcomings of the Arab, from his customs, from the conditions of his existence during centuries in a special *milieu*—the desert.

Then there were secondary causes, consequent upon the mistakes committed by the Arabs as conquerors.

Taking first the general causes, we find that the Arabs were never a political people, capable of great aims and of patient effort in view of their realization. They were a nomadic people, primitive, simple beings, not very far removed from animalism, obeying their instincts, unable to curb their passions or to control their desires. Powerless to conceive a higher interest, to cherish a lofty ideal, they have always lived a life of indiscipline. Subject to chronic anarchy, the Arab has never been able to subordinate his individual egoism to the pursuit of any great collective task, to the realization of any national ambition.

Even at the time of their greatness and power, they were a sort of federation of egoisms, brought together and kept together by the pressure of circumstances, but ready at any moment to fly at each others' throats.

Incapable of invention, they have copied, but have never been able to create. Incapable of progress, they tolerated the forms of government they found

movement. When these primitive beings, solely preoccupied by the satisfaction of material desires, sprang forward to the conquest of the world and fell into the midst of nations far advanced in civilization, they became rapidly corrupted. When the Bedouin, brought up to the rough life of the desert, accustomed to privation and suffering, was transplanted to Damascus or Bagdad, to Cordova or to Alexandria, he soon became a prey to all the vices of civilization; the half-starved creature was ready to burst with indigestion; the Spartan, by necessity, hitherto, became at once a Sybarite.

Unable to restrain his instincts, he entered into the enjoyment of an easy life and became perverted. Coarse and ignorant, he succumbed to the influence of subordinates more civilized than himself. He never had any authority but that of physical force; and when that passed from him by reason of his debasement, he forfeited all power. When foreign assistance was withdrawn, he became himself again—the Bedouin Arab.

The Bedouin cannot conceive any condition better than his own; he cannot imagine anything that does not actually exist, that he cannot see, that he does not possess. Driven by the keen desire for plunder, he left his desert and rushed to the conquest of the world. In contact with more civilized people he imitated, copied, and adopted all that he had been powerless to imagine for himself. He borrowed his religion from the Jews and Christians; his scientific knowledge and his legislation from Greco-Latin civilization; but whilst copying he has often missed the pure spirit of the original and distorted that which was beyond his limited understanding. In so far as he has been thrown into close association with other

peoples, he has succumbed to their influence, parodied their luxurious habits and their refined manners; but as soon as this foreign influence has been withdrawn, he has not been able to keep what he has learnt, but has fallen back into his original character as a coarse and ignorant Bedouin. It was in this way that after the fall of the Barmecides, their talented Persian ministers, the dynasty of the Abbassides, which up to then had had a brilliant career, fell suddenly into insignificance and decay.

Taking a bird's-eye view of Arab history, it is seen to be divided into several periods coinciding with the influence exercised by different foreign nations; there is the Syrian period, during the Caliphate of the Ommeyads; the Persian period, during the reign of the Abbassides; then the Spanish and the Egyptian periods, under their successors. During one period only the Arabs acted alone, this was during the reign of the first successors of Mahomet, and it should be noted that during this period the Arabs confined their efforts to conquest, plunder and destruction.

So far as the Bedouin has been submerged by foreigners, he has unconsciously come under their influence, and has been licked into some sort of shape by contact with them; and it was due to this circumstance that a certain expansion of civilization took place that has been falsely attributed to the Arabs, whereas its real authors were the Syrians, the Persians, the Hindus, the Spaniards, and the Egyptians. But as soon as the Bedouin has been left to himself, he has relapsed into his ancestral barbarism, the anarchical barbarism of the desert robber.

These appear to be the general causes that explain

the rapid decay and final collapse of the Arab Empire. But there are secondary causes whose influence upon its destinies was less only in degree. These causes are numerous:

In the first place, religion. Islam, as we have already said many times, is a secretion of the Arab brain; it is the adaptation of Judeo-Christian doctrines to Arab mentality. For want of imagination, the Bedouin has failed to animate his belief with any lofty ideal; it is very plantigrade, without horizon, like his own thought. Its ideal is the ideal of a nomad, of a dweller in the desert, of a primitive still floundering in the mud of material things—of animal satisfactions, eating, drinking, enjoying, sleeping—the poor philosophy of a brute whose mind does not penetrate the causes of things: of a fatalist who submits to events and resigns himself to whatever may happen.

Such a doctrine, anything but favourable to the development of intellectual faculties, was further aggravated by the clumsy zeal of fanatics, who, in the second century of the Hegira, succeeded in fixing it immutably, in crystallizing it, and, worse still, in clothing it with a sacred character by alleging its divine origin, thus making of it an intangible whole, and rendering any later evolution, any modification, any progress impossible.

Having thus become ossified, immutable, imperfectible, this doctrine has withstood the action of centuries; it is to-day what it was at the time of the Abbasside Caliphs. As it was forced upon the subject peoples, and as they, to avoid persecution, finally adopted it, it has stifled free will, together with the power of evolution and of accepting the teachings of experience; it has lowered their minds

to the level of Arab mentality. Those countries which were able to free themselves in good time from the Arab yoke and to escape from the Musulman religion, like Spain, Sicily, and Southern France, have kept their capacity to progress, and have been able to follow the course of their destiny as civilized nations; the others who, before their Islamization had shown undoubted aptitudes for progress, such as Syria, Persia and Egypt, have sunk into barbarism since their conversion, and have stayed there.

The deadening influence of Islam is well demonstrated by the way in which a Musulman comports himself at different stages of his life. In his early childhood, when the religion has not as yet impregnated his brain, he shows a very lively intelligence and a remarkably open mind, accessible to ideas of every kind; but, in proportion as he grows up, and as, through the system of his education, Islam lays hold of him and envelops him, his brain seems to shut up, his judgment to become atrophied, and his intelligence to be stricken by paralysis and irremediable degeneration.

Yet another cause that has hastened the decline of Arab dominion is to be found in the great diversity of the conquered peoples. The Arab Empire was formed haphazard as conquest followed conquest. The conquered nations, tribes, and colonies were divided by different interests, aspirations and necessities; there was no national unity. The chief bond of cohesion in a State is a common language, which brings about a close communion of ideas, and is materialized in a sort of way by the creation of a capital city, a vital centre, the heart as it were of the nation.

The Arab Empire was never conscious of any

CHAPTER XII

The Musulman community is theocratic—Religious law, inflexible and immutable, regulates its institutions as well as individual conduct—Legislation—Education—Government—The position of women—Commerce—Property—No originality in Musulman institutions—The Arab has imitated and distorted—In his manifestations of intellectual activity he appears to be paralytic, and since he has impregnated Islam with his inertia, the nations who have adopted this religion are stricken with the same sterility—All Musulmans, whatever their ethnic origin, think and act like a Bedouin barbarian of the time of Mahomet.

HAVING studied the history of the Arab Empire and penetrated the causes of its decline and fall, we are in a better position to understand the psychology of the Musulman, or rather that deformation that has come about through Arab influence, with Islam as its instrument, in every individual who has adopted this religion.

The Musulman community is theocratic; everything in it is regulated by religious law, the most trivial actions of the individual as well as its institutions. God is the supreme master. Knowledge is not considered to be a means of knowing Him better, or of serving Him more intelligently. Human intelligence and human activity have no other object than to glorify Him. The individual is brought to this conception by a whole network of measures and enactments woven by the doctors of the faith in the second century of the Hegira.

Ibn-Khaldoun says in his *Prolegomena* that one of the distinctive marks of Musulman civilization is the practice of teaching the Koran to young children. He might have added that the teaching of the Holy Book, to the exclusion of all else, constitutes the curriculum of primary, secondary, and higher studies. God being the dispenser of all good things, everything is brought back to Him—science, the arts, and all manifestations of human activity. To know His word is the sole preoccupation of the faithful; but the Koran is written in a dead language that a Musulman cannot understand without special study; and so, to simplify the task, he has had to be content with reading the sacred text without seeking to understand it. To read well, to pronounce the words correctly, there you have the whole *scibile* of the nations of Islam.[1]

Moreover, it would be of no service to a believer to be able to understand the divine word, since he is not allowed to interpret it, nor to take it as his rule of conduct by applying it to current events. The interpretation of the Koran has been fixed once for all by the orthodox commentators; this interpretation is final, and no Musulman may modify it under penalty of apostasy. This formal and irrevocable prohibition shuts the Mahometan nations off from all progress. Executed at barbarous epoch, the orthodox interpretation has for a long time past fallen short of the progress in every domain realized by civilized nations; the world has evolved, but the true believer, entangled in a net of obsolete texts, cannot follow this evolution. In the midst of modern States he remains a man of the Middle Ages. To convince oneself of this it is only necessary to make a cursory

[1] Sawas Pasha, "Et. sur le Droit musulman."

such unity. The Latins, Greeks, Slavs, Arabs, Persians, Hindus, Egyptians, and Berbers, brought together by the iron will of the conqueror, could neither understand each other nor fraternize nor combine for the pursuit of any common ideal. They formed a shapeless and ill-assorted whole. As soon as the authority that imposed an artificial cohesion upon them disappeared, they parted company and the Empire crumbled.

Another cause of decadence was the despotic power of the prince, at once temporal and spiritual head of the State. Whilst such tremendous power might yield remarkable results in the hands of a man of genius, it became an instrument of ruin when wielded by an incapable; but men of genius are unfortunately rare, and, as we have seen, apart from a few exceptions, the Caliphs were inferior to their task.

The absence of any law of succession was a further cause of decline. By neglecting to fix any rule to regulate the succession, Mahomet left the door open to intrigue and ambition of all kinds; and this element of destruction was still further aggravated by the insubordinate spirit of the Arabs and by the rivalries that split up every tribe.

The servile position of women, imposed by Islam, has been and still remains a cause of decadence for the Musulman community. Relegated to the harem, a beast of burden amongst the poor, a creature for pleasure amongst the rich, the wife, shut off from the outer world, remains the depositary of ignorance and prejudice; and as it is she who brings up the children, she inculcates the traditions of barbarism of which the egoism of the male has constituted her the guardian.

The gravest error committed by the Arab conqueror was in compelling the conquered peoples to become converts to Islam. By the fact of conversion, the vanquished became the equal of his vanquisher, entitled to enjoy the same rights, the same privileges; and as in the majority of cases he was his superior in intelligence and intellectual culture, he came to exercise a preponderating influence; so that the conquering Arab, by the very reason of the rapidity and extent of his conquests, found himself, as it were, drowned in a sea of foreign peoples who imposed their manners upon him and corrupted him. They dominated him all the more easily as he was incapable, through want of knowledge and experience of taking the lead and of establishing his moral authority.

The same mistake had been committed by the Romans in former days, when they had granted the citizenship to barbarians.

"An exchange was established between Italy and the Provinces. Italy sent her sons to die in distant lands and received in compensation millions of slaves. Of these, some were attached to the land, cultivated it, and soon enriched it with their bones; others, crowded together in the towns, attentive to the vices of a master, were often freed by him and became citizens. Little by little the sons of freed men came to be in sole possession of the city, composed the Roman people, and under this name gave laws to the world. From the time of the Gracchi, they alone nearly filled the Forum. . . . Thus, a new people succeeded to the Roman people, absent or destroyed."[1]

The systematic Islamization of the vanquished

[1] Michelet, "Hist. Romaine."

had a still more fatal consequence for the Arabs. The greater part of the slaves were Negroes, that is to say they belonged to an inferior race, absolutely refractory to all civilization. By accepting Islam, these slaves raised themselves to the level of their masters; mixed marriages were frequent and numerous, and thus the Arab blood was impoverished. This crossing effectively corrupted and debased the Arab race.

Everywhere else, in Syria, in Persia, in India and Egypt, in the Moghreb and in Spain, mixed marriages enabled the subject population to submerge their conqueror. The Arab race was diluted to such an extent that it is impossible to find a single representative of it to-day, among the Musulman peoples, outside of Arabia.

The Islamization of the vanquished had yet another consequence: it diminished the revenues of the Empire. What constituted the wealth of the Caliphs and enabled them to display a pomp and magnificence that reinforced their authority was the tribute paid by non-Musulmans in consideration of the right to preserve their own beliefs. When, after the second century of the Hegira, the fanatics compelled the vanquished by their persecutions to become converts to Islam, the new Musulmans became the equals of the Arabs, they ceased to pay tribute, and the treasury of the Caliphs was soon emptied.

When, through the increasing effeminacy of the Arabs who had lost their warlike qualities of strength and endurance, and had betaken themselves to mercantile pursuits, the Caliphs could no longer recruit Arab soldiers, they were obliged to have recourse to foreign mercenaries. This was the

origin of the Turkish, Slav, Berber and Spanish troops, who, under the last Caliphs, ended by disposing of power and choosing the sovereign. Mercenary troops, who by their turbulence had hastened the downfall of the Roman Empire, in the same way contributed to the ruin of the Arab Empire.

Such were the multiple causes that brought about the decadence and final collapse of Arab dominion.

examination of the various institutions of the Islamic community.

Legislation.—The Koran is, in principle, the source from which the Musulmans have drawn their inspiration; but Mahomet had neither the time, nor possibly even the intention of establishing an exact doctrine settled in all its details. In his anxiety to attract followers, he tried his best to please everybody. He was a diplomatist and a tribune rather than a legislator. According to circumstances, he expressed an opinion or a theory which he had no hesitation in repealing on the following day, if the interest of the moment demanded it. Again, the Koran contains commandments so contradictory that it would be difficult to extract any precise rules of conduct from it, beyond the recognition of the unity of God and the mission of His Messenger. In this way Mahomet at one time declared that Christians and Jews, *people of the Book*, were to be respected for the same reason as Musulmans; and at another time that they were to be exterminated without mercy. This is but one example of his contradictions; many others might be quoted.

The consequence is that the Koran is a singularly confused code, and that the successors of the Prophet, charged with its application, were sometimes very much embarrassed. The more scrupulous of them surrounded themselves with counsellors chosen from among those who had lived on intimate terms with the Messenger of God and were supposed to know his mind. Others acted on the inspiration of the moment, often enough according to their own good will and pleasure. But when the tide of Arab conquest had extended the Empire, the Caliph, finding it a physical impossibility to dispense justice by

himself unaided, had to delegate his powers, and as it would be dangerous to leave each of these delegates at liberty to interpret the sacred texts for himself, the necessity of drawing up a code sufficiently precise for their use was recognized.[1]

The work roughly drafted by the earlier Caliphs and continued after them in different parts of the Empire, was finished by certain jurisconsults who were the founders of the four orthodox rites: Malekite, Hanefite, Chafeite, and Hanbalite. The work of each of the four interpreters of the Koran, conceived on the same principles, is a sort of compilation of very diverse texts. These are:

1. The commandments of the Koran.

2. The sayings of the Prophet, recorded by his early companions. The word of God (*Koran*), and the conduct of his Envoy (*Sounnet*), are the chief sources of Musulman law. The divine word was communicated by the angel of the Lord to Mahomet, and by him transmitted to men, in terms identical with those the angel had used and which the Elect of the Most High (*Moustafa*) had faithfully preserved in his memory. The conduct of the Prophet is similarly the result of divine inspiration, direct and immediate; it comprises the sayings, the actions, and the approbations, explicit or tacit, of the founder of Islam. God and the Prophet are the Musulman legislators; their legislation is, according to the sanctioned phrase, a *precious gift of Heaven.*[2]

But the commandments of God (*Koran*) and those of the Prophet (*Sounnet*) were not sufficient to meet all cases; it was, therefore, necessary to complete them. The jurisconsults, incapable of accomplishing

[1] Seignette, "Introd. à la trad. de Khalil."
[2] Sawas Pasha, op. cit.

this work by drawing from their own inner consciousness, sought elsewhere the inspiration they lacked. The sources from which they drew are known :—

3. *Roman Law*, which was in force in the majority of the newly conquered countries—Syria, Egypt, and Moghreb. But in adopting these laws, the Arabs distorted them to such an extent that their original signification was lost;

4. *Pre-Islamic customs* which, while not condemned by the Koran, were considered as approved; and others which had been modified by the Prophet without having been abolished;

5. *The Old Testament*, for the commandments relating to murder and adultery;[1]

6. *Judgments delivered by the Caliphs* in accordance with the Koran.

According to the orthodox commentators who fixed the doctrine, legislation is the acquaintance of man with his rights and duties. This knowledge is obtained by study of the science of law which comprises both philosophy and morals.

Philosophy lays down the relations of man to other beings, and between man and the Legislator *par excellence*, who is God. Morality teaches the relations which ought to exist between the individual members of a community, or between the individual and the community. It forms the conscience of the man and that of the Judge, and strengthens it to the point of enabling the one and the other to distinguish beauty (*legality*) from ugliness (*illegality*).[2]

The four interpretations of the Koran represent four different texts. Wherever Musulman law is in force every believer may choose one or other of these

[1] S. Levy, "Moise, Jésus, Mahomet."
[2] Sawas Pasha.

interpretations; but his choice once made, he must see that his conduct conforms to it.

The works of the commentators have replaced the Koran itself to such an extent that the Koran can no longer be quoted in support of a judgment. A legal decision stated as being based upon a text directly derived from the revealed Book would be null and void, and might entail a penalty upon its author. Such a mode of proceeding would constitute, in effect, a heresy, and would be regarded as an attempted insubordination to the orthodox interpretations. These are final and unchangeable. No one has any right to modify them by extension or restriction.

But, as they were drawn up in the second century of the Hegira, at a barbarous period, they have immobilized the Musulman community, and now they hinder its evolution. They have afflicted the brains of all believers with irremediable stagnation; and so long as they are in force, those believers will remain incapable of progress and civilization.

Education.—According to the Musulman doctors, human knowledge is derived from two principal sources—reason and faith. Again, the sciences form two classes: the *rational* (Aklïa) and the *imposed* or *positive* (Ouadiya).[1]

The *rational* comprise those that man can acquire by his own reason, without the help of revelation: such are geography, mathematics, chemistry, physics, astronomy, etc.; they are considered as secondary, and in the programmes of teaching, or curricula, they yield the first place to the sciences of revelation that man owes to the divine generosity. These comprise two categories:

[1] Ibn-Khaldoun, "Prolegomena"; Ebn-Sina, "De divisione scientiarum."

The sciences of language, or instrumental sciences—reading and writing, which allow one to approach the study of the Koran.

The sciences of law which treat of the reading of the revealed Book and of the legislative application of the divine words, made by the orthodox interpreters.

The sciences of law are subdivided into *sciences of origin* and *sciences deduced* from these original sources. The sciences of origin concern the study of the sources of religion and of law, that is to say the Koran and the conduct of the Prophet. This study comprises first the reading of the Koran and of the Hadith, or collected sayings of Mahomet; it is the application to the sacred texts of the principles taught by the sciences of language. As soon as one has acquired the perfect reading of the Koran, one proceeds to the explanation of the words which together make up the revealed Book; this is called the *annotation*.

When the student possesses a complete knowledge of the origins or sources, he passes on to the study of the *deduced sciences*, that is to say, those that flow from the sources properly so-called: viz., the Koran and the Hadith. They comprise the study of religious doctrine and of the beliefs connected with it, and of the theory of law and of the applications of the law.

Law forms part of the theological sciences because it enables one to distinguish the licit from the illicit, good from evil, according to the commandments of the Koran and of the Hadith. "The theory of law forms the first subdivision of legislative sciences. The applications of law are divided into three distinct groups. The first refers to human actions having a

religious character: prayer, fasting, the obligation of giving alms, the pilgrimage, the holy war; the second refers to legal dispositions concerning human actions of a purely social and contractual character."[1]

Such is Musulman education: it is pure scholasticism. It may be well to add that this education is given in the mosques, that each professor takes the course that suits him, and each student follows the lectures of his favourite professor. Neither matriculation nor diplomas limit the entire liberty enjoyed by the professors and their pupils. There exists, however, one form of recognition of the studies pursued. Each professor delivers to the most meritorious of his pupils an authorization to teach in their turn (*Idjaza*). The Idjaza is delivered either in writing or it is given orally by the professor, not for one science or for a group of sciences, but just for one book read or learnt, for one definite branch of a science; for instance for one reading of the Koran, for several of these readings, or for all the readings; for the Hadith, for grammar, for caligraphy, or for one or several of the commentaries.[2]

Such an education is almost fruitless, since the scientific part is suppressed in favour of the theological part. It benumbs the brain and renders knowledge stationary. A nation might read the Koran and explain minutely every word for centuries without advancing one step on the road to progress. By marking time, as it were, in the tedious repetition of a tiresome lesson, the mind loses its elasticity, its sagacity, and its curiosity; the intellect becomes atrophied and incapable of an original effort. It is here that we must seek for the cause of the intellectual torpor of Musulman nations.

[1] Sawas Pasha.
[2] Yacoub Artin Pasha, op. cit.

The Musulman Community: The Government.—In studying any Musulman institution, we must never lose sight of the fact that the laws governing it are of a religious order. The Musulman community is steeped in a religious atmosphere. The language and the legislation are the gifts of God; everything in Islam is contained in religion. Public and private instruction, administration, justice, finance, the assessment of taxes, international relations, peace, war, commerce, the arts, trades, and professions, the exercise of charity, public security, public works, all have a religious character. Nothing can be maintained, nothing will work except through religion and through its ordinances. A learned Asiatic calls the peoples of Islam "*Corpora ecclesiæ.*"[1]

The government, like the other institutions, is of religious inspiration. The Caliphate, a mode of government that succeeded to the patriarchal administration of the Prophet, was a religious institution fraternal and popular. Musulman authors give the following definition of it: "Musulmans should be ruled by an Imam (Caliph) having the right and authority to watch over the observance of the precepts of the law, to see that legal penalties are enforced, to defend the frontiers, to raise armies, to levy the fiscal tithes, to suppress rebels and brigands, to celebrate public prayer on Fridays and the feasts of Beyram, to judge the citizens, to admit juridical proofs in contested cases, to marry children under the legal age, of either sex, who have no natural guardians, to proceed finally to the division of legal booty."[2]

In its origin, in conformity with the institutions of the Prophet, the Caliphate was not a despotic

[1] Sawas Pasha.

[2] "Catéchisme de l'imam Nedjem-od-Din Nassafi."

government. "The theocratic law of Islam forbids any individual to act capriciously, solely according to his personal leanings; it ordains and protects the rights of private persons; it imposes on the sovereign the duty of taking counsel before action. This law has been imposed by God upon his impeccable Prophet, although, as such, he had no need to consult anybody, since he was acting under divine inspiration and was endowed with all perfections. But that injunction was only laid upon the Prophet for a high reason, which was to establish an obligatory rule for all who should come after him."[1]

This theory fell into disuse when the Arabs, extending their conquests, found themselves in the midst of people accustomed to despotic rule, like the Syrians, the Persians, the Egyptians, etc. The Caliph then became an absolute sovereign and the Caliphate a sort of military despotism which had its apogee about the second century of the Hegira, with the dynasty of the Abbassides. As it was at this period that the foundations of the different institutions were fixed by law, it followed that the doctrine relating to government was naturally inspired by that which then existed, and that the principle of the absolute power of the Caliph became a dogma. The doctors of the faith who drew up the legislative texts intended to reserve to themselves a share in the government by specifying that the prince could not decide upon any matter without first consulting them; but as they were at the mercy of his will and pleasure, it was he who, in reality, exercised power without control.

In fact, the Musulman sovereign is an absolute monarch, a military war-lord and a religious ruler in one. He has the power of life and death over his

[1] Ibn-Khaldoun, "Du Souverain."

subjects. The best proof of this is that they pay a capitation tax, a sort of ransom or permission to live, for which the official receipt bears these significant words: "Ransom from being beheaded." Whoever owns property is only the usufructuary of his estate; on his death, the sovereign can claim the whole or part of his heritage.

The rôle of the prince would be a crushing burden for one man; but in the East, where one soon becomes a believer in the minimum of effort, the Caliphs were not long in finding a means of lightening their task by delegating their powers to a Vizier. The latter passed his own on to the Pasha; the Pasha shuffled off his duties on to the Bey; the Bey on to the Caïd, and the Caïd on to the Sheikh. Such a division of authority augments the number of oppressors, favours bribery and corruption, and hands over the population to an innumerable rabble of parasites.

The *Vizier* takes the sovereign's place in the administration of affairs, the command of the army, and the supervision of the officials. His office is a dangerous one; the holder serves as a buffer between prince and people; he must endure the caprices of the one and incur the hatred of the other; but the position is so lucrative, it admits of so much extortion, that candidates have never been wanting.

Administrative decisions are taken by a *divan* or Council of State, composed of high personages; but they, chiefly concerned to carry favour with the prince or with his Vizier, are but servile creatures, ready for any compromising actions.

The *Ulemas*, or doctors of theology and jurisprudence, form a special body whose duty is to watch over the observance of the fundamental laws, to

register as religious dogmas the decrees issued by the Council of State. This control is purely theoretical, since the Ulemas depend upon the goodwill and pleasure of the sovereign. They are, in addition, charged with the dispensation of justice. Their supreme head is the *Sheikh-El-Islam*, who must be consulted when a law is to be decreed, a tax imposed, or a war undertaken; he has under his orders the *Cadis* who dispense justice without appeal.

The purely civil authority is wielded by the *Pashas* or governors, whose business it is to see to the maintenance of order and the payment of taxes.

In principle, there can only be one sovereign in Islam—the Commander of the Faithful. According to the Hadith, he should be of Koreich origin; but, in the absence of a suitable member of that family, it is the man who at the moment has the disposal of the material force that guards the interests of the Empire. His nationality matters little; for the Musulman has only one country—Islam. He does not die for his country but for his faith. He is neither a Turk, an Egyptian, nor an Arab; he is simply a Believer.

To conclude, Caliphate government is a barbarous government, that of a conquering minority, occupying countries subdued by force of arms, and solely concerned with exploiting them to its profit. It is a government of parasites, indifferent to the needs and the interests of the community. The Arab, incapable of devising anything new, has retained his primitive conception of government, necessitated by circumstances, at the time when he was rushing to the conquest of the world.

The Position of Women.—If we were to go by the commandments of the Koran and the sayings of the Prophet, the Musulman woman might be

One day a woman asked the Prophet what were the duties of a wife towards her husband: to her he replied: "A wife should not leave her home without her husband's leave; it is this consideration that justifies the use of the veil."[1]

In their intimacy, she should comply with all the desires of the male. "Go to your field as you like";[2] which the commentators explain as follows: "Venite ad agrum vestrum quomodocumque volueritis, id est stando, sedendo, jacendo, a parte anteriori, seu posteriori."

Mahomet has not spoken of the education of women. The majority of the commentators hold that she ought to be forbidden to learn writing, poetry, and composition, because these studies contain a pernicious element that might spoil her mind and character.

If account be taken of the usual customs of his day, it cannot be denied that the Prophet sensibly ameliorated the position of women; but there happened to her what happens in the Musulman community in every direction of thought.

Mahomet was of his time; it was impossible for him to foresee the evolution in ideas and in manners that would be accomplished after him. His words were applicable to the present and not to the future. If he could have foreseen this future, it is probable, given his temperament, that he would have accepted its progress. Unfortunately, the orthodox interpreters of the Koran and of the Hadith, in the narrowness of their minds and in the blindness of their fanaticism holding to the letter rather than to the spirit of the sacred texts, fixed for all time the position of the Musulman woman; and as they

[1] Sheikh Mohammed-es-Senoussi.
[2] Koran, Ch. II.

took for their basis the customs of the period, they rendered any ulterior improvement impossible. Humanity has made some progress since the second century of the Hegira; the Musulman community has been unable to follow this evolution.

The consequence is that women are treated to-day, throughout Islam, as their female ancestors were treated in the time of the Prophet. But what was then progress is nowadays retrogression.

The Musulman woman thinks and behaves as did the ladies of Mahomet's harem. Isolated from the life beyond her threshold, she remains in the barbarism of ancestral custom. Her present position, compared with that of the women of other religions, is that of a slave. A magnificently got up animal, a beast of pleasure in the rich man's house; a beast of burden among the poor; she is nothing but a poor creature handed over to the good pleasure of the male. Condemned to ignorance by the egoism of man, she cannot even build in hope upon the future. She is the eternal cloistered captive, the eternal slave. Her ignorance and her barbarism have their weight upon the children she rears and to whom she transmits her opinions and prejudices. Ignorant herself she creates others like her; a barbarian, she spreads barbarism around her; a slave, she gives her children slaves' souls, together with all the vices of a servile nature—dissimulation, lying, and deceit.

Commerce.—It has already been said, but it cannot be too often repeated, that everything, in the Musulman community, assumes a religious character. All manifestations of human activity are subjected to dogma, and can only be developed within the limits fixed and sanctioned by the rules of the faith. Commerce does not escape this tutelage,

regarded as enjoying favourable treatment. As an able diplomatist, Mahomet tried to win over woman to his cause and to make an ally of her at a time when he was struggling with his own people. This desire shows itself in all his sermons, and indeed the Bedouin woman does owe a great deal to him. Before his time, she was a sort of inferior being, without legal position, a slave to the good pleasure of the male. Mahomet tried to tone down the extreme egoism of the barbarous customs of which she was the victim.

Exhortations to kindness abound in the Koran: "Fear the Lord, and honour the womb that bare thee . . . O Believers! it is not lawful for you to make yourselves the heirs of your wives against their will, nor to hinder them from marrying again when you have put them away, so that you may take away from them a portion of what you have given them. Be kind in your behaviour towards them. If you wish to change one woman for another, and you have given one of them a hundred dinars, let her keep it all."[1]

"Are you keeping your wife? treat her properly: are you divorcing her? do it generously."[2]

There is the same spirit of benevolence in the sayings of the Prophet collected in the Hadith: "God commandeth you to be kind to your women; they are your mothers, your daughters, your aunts."

In his own actions Mahomet set the example of kindness. He used often to amuse himself among his women; and the story is told that one day he was running races with Aïsha, and she beat him; but the second time it was the Prophet who won. Then Mahomet said to her: "The game is equal, O Aïsha."[3]

[1] Koran, Ch. IV.
[2] *Ibid.*, Ch. II.
[3] Sheikh Mohammed-es-Senoussi; "Epanouissement de la fleur."

One day he invited some Abyssinians to come and play at his house, and asked his wife to be present at their games; but, in order that she should not be seen by the audience, he placed her between the two doors of the house and stood in front of her, remaining in this position until she had finished watching the players. Then, when his wife had returned to her own apartments, the Prophet, addressing the company, said: "The best of Believers is he who shows the most gentleness and delicacy towards women. The first among you is he who is most amiable with his women, and I am better than you as regards my own."[1]

Before his death, Mahomet again insisted in favour of a cause that was dear to him:

"Treat women well; they are your helpers and they can do nothing by themselves; you have taken them as a property that God has entrusted to you and you have taken possession of them with divine words."

It must at the same time be admitted that the Prophet has also made certain concessions to male jealousy, and that he has recognized certain Arab customs: "Virtuous women are obedient and submissive, those who disobey you will banish to a separate bed and you will beat them."[2]

"Bid the women who believe to lower their eyes, to observe continence, to allow none but their outward charms to be seen, to cover their bosom with a veil, to let none but their husband, their father, or their husband's father see their charms . . . or children who cannot distinguish the difference of sex. Women must not wave their feet about in a way to display their hidden charms."[3]

[1] Sheikh Mohammed-es-Senoussi.
[2] Koran, Ch. IV, v. 38.
[3] *Ibid.*, Ch. XXIV.

the laws that regulate it are inspired by religious considerations.

"The object of every contract," says Khalil, "should be: first, free from defilement; second, useful; third, lawful; fourth, possible. So the following cannot be the object of a contract: manure, damaged oil, forbidden meat, an animal on the point of death, a sporting-dog, a stray camel, anything detained by violence in the hands of a third party."

The Koran having forbidden usury,[1] the interpreters have "gone one better" on this prohibition. Musulman law qualifies as usury not only illicit gain, as we understand it, but "all profit or advantage discounted or allowed in the exchange of gold and silver or in the exchange of foodstuffs . . . the wages taken in kind by the goldsmith from the weight of metal given to him to work up, or by the master of the oil-press on the weight of olives to be crushed; every combination suspected of concealing a loan under the form of a sale or amounting to a usurious profit."[2]

In his desire to hinder usury, the Musulman legislator has fallen into subtleties that verge upon the absurd. As an example, the following clause: "One cannot buy for gold what has been sold on credit for silver, nor for one currency that which has been sold in another."[3] Lending at interest is forbidden in principle, but as it was difficult to suppress it altogether, it was replaced by sleeping partnership and by real pact or contract.

"Sleeping partnership is a contract under which one entrusts money to a merchant, for him to trade with, on condition of participation in the profits

[1] Koran, Ch. III, v. 125.
[2] Khalil, t. i., Ch. II.
[3] *Ibid.*, t. i., Ch. II.

thereof."[1] This form of loan was in existence among the ancient Arabs long before Islam; it was by a contract of this nature that Mahomet became the partner of Khadija.

" A real pact is a contract for a consideration, unilateral, creating a personal obligation to give a certain corporeal object, of a different nature from the thing received and not consisting of cash."[2] It is a form of barter.

The attraction of gain being in reality the principal element in all commercial activity, the legislator has not been able to abolish the loan at interest. He fights with energy against usury; he solemnly declares that the exchange of produce or of objects ought not to give rise to any gain, but he immediately adds this subtle restriction: " unless these things do not differ in the use to which they are destined. Thus, one may demand for a donkey of the Cairo breed two Arab donkeys; for a race-horse two pack-horses; more young animals in exchange for a full-grown one; a sword of good make for several ordinary swords."[3] There you have the loan at interest not only tolerated, but authorized. Who is going to interfere with the lender and compel him to swear that he has given a race-horse to the borrower, who pledges himself to repay two pack-horses, when in reality the horse lent may be identical in kind with the horses repaid, one of these representing the interest on the capital advanced?

Property.—In that which concerns property there is the same desire and the same impossibility of preventing usury. Mortgage is forbidden, but its place is taken by pledging, or rahnia. " By rahnia

[1] Ibn-Arfa.
[2] Ibn-Arfa.
[3] Khalil, t. ii., Ch. I.

is meant that which is handed over as the security for a debt."[1] Musulman law distinguishes the pledging or pawning of a movable possession from the hypothecation of revenue, or *nantissement*, of an immovable possession. This sort of contract, far from hindering usury, favours it. The creditor is authorized to enjoy the pledged possession; but this enjoyment, which represents the interest on his capital, often exceeds in value what our legislation considers as a lawful rate of interest. In the majority of cases, the borrower being unable to pay his debt, the lender keeps the pledged possession and disposes of it, as the real owner, for a ridiculous price.

Property among a barbarous people is threatened by manifold dangers, and notably from spoliation. Musulman law tries to protect it, and it is with this object that it has instituted *habous*, the idea of which was inspired by the *Novellæ* and the *Institutes* of Justinian. The habous is an institution according to which the owner of a property renders it inalienable by making over the enjoyment of it to some pious object or work of public utility, either immediately or on the extinction of the intermediate inheritors whom he names.[2] The head of a family thus protects his possessions from the extravagance of his heirs or from the covetousness and encroachment of influential personages.

There are also two liabilities to be noticed which encumber Musulman property, and which were, and still are, the cause of numerous quarrels between Europeans and natives—the rights of sport and of pasture. "No man may forbid hunting and fishing, even on his own land. . . . No man may forbid

[1] Ibn-Arfa.
[2] J. Terras, "Essai sur les biens Habous."

common rights of pasture on his waste lands or on land from which the crops have been reaped."[1]

Landed property among the Arabs is subjected to a communistic régime. The land belongs to God, represented by the Caliph, who leaves the use of it to the Musulman community. This régime which is suitable to nomadism is fatal to the development of agricultural labour.

[1] Khalil, t. xxi., Ch. II.

CHAPTER XIII

The sterility of the Arab mind is apparent in every manifestation of intellectual activity—Arab civilization is the result of the intellectual efforts of non-Arab peoples converted to Islam — Arab science, astronomy, mathematics, chemistry, medicine, is only a copy of Greek science—In history and geography the Arabs have left a few original works—In philosophy they are the pupils of the School of Alexandria—In literature, with the exception of a few lyric poems of no great value, they are under the inspiration of Greek and Persian models — The literature of the Moors in Spain is of Latin inspiration—In the fine arts, sculpture, painting and music, the nullity of the Arabs is absolute.

THE sterility of the Arab mind is apparent in every manifestation of intellectual activity, and more particularly in letters, in art, and in science, whose culture calls for qualities of originality and imagination. When the Arab wished to embark upon a literary, artistic, or scientific work, he had nothing to draw upon in his own inner conscientiousness; so he copied and imitated, without ever originating anything.

What is called "Arab civilization," in so far as any manifestation of Arab genius is concerned, has never had any real existence. The civilization that passes under that name is due to the labour of other peoples who, subjected to Islam by force, continued to develop their aptitudes in spite of the persecutions of their conquerors.

When the Arab people, under the earliest succes-

sors of Mahomet, undertook wars of conquest, they were a horde of rude barbarians, innocent of any intellectual culture, or of any artistic or scientific attainments. As compared with the Greeks, Persians, and Egyptians, they were in much the same situation as the Berbers of Northern Africa find themselves to-day in relation to European nations.

A series of unforeseen successes precipitated the Bedouins into the midst of civilized nations, who exerted an incontestable influence upon them; nevertheless they were slow to assimilate foreign attainments. The earliest works in the Arab language were composed under the rule of the Abbasside Caliphs, not by Arabs, but by Syrians, Greeks, and Persians, converted to Islam. It was only towards the third century of the Hegira that the Bedouins began to be civilized. It is to this period that the translations of Greek, Syrian, Persian, and Latin works may be dated, which revealed to the conquering Arabs stores of knowledge of which they were totally ignorant, and introduced among them the elements of former civilizations.[1]

But this foreign influence only made itself felt upon those Arabs who had left their country to settle in Syria, in Persia, or in Egypt. The bulk of the nation who stayed in Arabia were shut off from this influence, and remained in a state of barbarism.

To give the name "Arab civilization" to the artistic, literary and scientific movement that by a false documentation is made to coincide with the accession of the Abbasside Caliphs, is to fall into error. In the first place, because the Arab element only

[1] Yakoub Artin Pasha, "L'instruction publique en Egypte," pp. 11 and 12.

participated in it to an extent hardly perceptible; and further, because this movement was the result of the intellectual activity of foreign nations only converted to Islam by force; and finally, because the movement was already in existence in the countries conquered by the Arabs long before their arrival. The Syrian, Persian, and Indian works which are the manifestation of this intellectual movement, and which carry on the Greco-Latin work, are anterior to the Musulman conquests. It is, then, in defiance of fact to attribute this artistic and scientific effort to the Arabs, and to give the name of "Arab Civilization" to an intellectual movement due to the Syrians, to the Persians, to the Hindus, unwilling converts to Islam, but who, nevertheless, had preserved the qualities of their race. In reality, the movement was nothing more than the continuation, and, as it were, the ultimate flowering of Greco-Latin civilization. It is easy to prove this.

When Caliph Al Manzor (745-755), fascinated by the brilliancy of Byzantine culture and advised by Syrian, Greek, and Persian officials, who filled the various offices of the Empire, wished to spread the knowledge of science, he caused translations to be made into Arabic of the principal Greek authors: Aristotle, Hippocrates, Galen, Dioscorides, Euclid, Archimedes, and Ptolemy. There were Syriac versions of these authors already in existence, and the task of translating them into Arabic was therefore entrusted to Syrian scribes. It was through these translations that the Arabs made acquaintance with the Greek works, and upon them that they worked in the first instance. But the Syrian scribes, too recently converted to Islam to be fully imbued with Musulman dogma, were content to translate

the Greek authors faithfully. The Arab fanatics consequently found these versions not sufficiently orthodox; certain passages wounded their religious feelings; so, when they were sufficiently instructed to do without their Syrian intermediaries, they hastened to bring out new translations in accordance with Arab susceptibilities, and in harmony with Musulman conceptions. They suppressed everything in the Greek works that seemed to them contrary to the teachings of Islam; they added the religious formulæ with which they were familiar, and they even carried their zeal to the extent of causing the names of the original authors to disappear.

These compilations were made not from the original Greek, nor even from the Syriac versions, but from Arabic translations made from the Syriac by Syrian scribes, so that the thought of the original authors was not only distorted by these successive interpretations, but even falsified by Musulman fanaticism.

These shapeless or distorted works, to which it is difficult to give a name, passed current during the Middle Ages as the original productions of Arab genius. Their true character was not discovered until much later, when, at the time of the Renaissance, the Greek manuscripts were exhumed from ancient libraries and there were scholars capable of translating them.

It was in this way that there were falsely attributed to the astronomer, Maschallah, who lived during the reign of Haroun-al-Raschid, certain treatises on the astrolabe and the armillary sphere, which were nothing but distorted reproductions, according to the method described above, of Arabic versions made by Syrians from Syriac translations of

the works of Ptolemy.[1] About the same time, Ahmed ben Mohammed Alnehavendi, who, by the way, was a *Persian* converted to Islam, drew up some astronomical tables from the same source.

Under the reign of Al-Mamoun, Send ben Ali and Khaled ben Abd-el-Malek Almerourandi, who measured a degree of meridian, did no more than apply the theories of Greek mathematicians. Another astronomer, Mohammed ben Moussa Alkhowarezmi, an *Islamized Persian*, drew up some tables after Hindu authors; and other tables were composed by Ahmed ben Abd'Allah Habach, from Ptolemy, and writers of his school.

The famous Al Kendi, who enjoyed such a great reputation in the Middle Ages, and who was known as the *Philosopher par excellence*, was an Islamized *Syrian Jew.* His works on geometry, arithmetic, astrology, meteorology, medicine, and philosophy, were translations or compilations from Aristotle and his commentators.

Other astronomers and mathematicians, such as Albumazar, Al Naïrizi, and Albategui—the two latter being Persians—were compilers from writers of the school of Alexandria. In fact, in astrology and astronomy the Arabs were merely imitators.

Born in Chaldæa before the dawn of history, then imported into Egypt, this science was introduced into Greece, where its confused principles and observations that had been transmitted orally from generation to generation, were co-ordinated and fixed in writing.

Ptolemy's *Almagest* may be regarded as a complete statement of the astronomical attainments of antiquity. It was from this work, known to them by Syriac versions, that the Arab authors quarried, and

[1] Sedillot, "Hist. des Arabes."

upon which they commented, under a hundred different forms, without adding anything to the original.

To the study of mathematics the Arabs in like manner contributed nothing new.[1] For a long time they were credited with the invention of algebra, whereas they did no more than copy the treatises of Diophantus of Alexandria, who lived in the fourth century; but, as the source from which they drew was unknown in the Middle Ages, they were looked upon, quite wrongly, as the originators.

The numerals commonly called Arabic, and the system of notation which bears the same name, come from Hindustan. The Arabs themselves call arithmetic "Indian reckoning," and geometry "Indian science" (hendesya).

Arab knowledge of botany was obtained either from the treatises of Dioscorides, or from Hindu and Persian works.[2]

In chemistry, or rather alchemy, they were the pupils of the Alexandrian school. Djeber and Rhazès, the latter an Islamized *Persian*, did no more than copy the works of Alexandrian Hermetism.[3]

There is the same absence of invention in regard to medicine. From the third century of the Christian era, Greek physicians had found their way into Persia, where they founded the celebrated school of Djondischabour, which soon became the rival of Alexandria. They taught especially the doctrines of Aristotle, of Hipparchus, and of Hippocrates, which the Persians readily assimilated. Mesué, one of their

[1] Sedillot, "Recherches pour servir à l'hist. des sciences math. chez les Arabes."

[2] Clément Mullet, "Recherches sur l'hist. naturelle et physique des Arabes."

[3] Berthelot, "Origines de la chimie"; Hoefer, "Hist. de la chimie."

pupils, of *Persian* origin, became physician to Haroun-al-Raschid, and composed several treatises in imitation of Hippocrates, among which may be quoted his *Demonstrations*, a *Pharmacopeia*, and some papers on fevers and on food.[1]

But it was especially at Alexandria that Greek medicine emerged from empiricism and assumed a really scientific character.

Herephiles and Erasistratus by their works prepared the way for Galen, who was to give this science its full development. The treatises of Galen, under the name of *Pandects of Medicine*, were compiled and translated into Syriac by Aaron, a Christian priest who lived at Alexandria in the seventh century. This Syriac version was translated into Arabic in 685,[2] and is the source from which the Arab physicians drew, notably Serapion, Avicenna, Albucasis, and Averrhoës, whose *Koullyat* is a downright translation of Galen. The only Musulman who introduced anything new into medicine was Rhazès, who died in 932: he was a *Persian*. He introduced the use of mild purgatives and of chemical preparations into pharmacy; he was regarded as the inventor of the seton and advocated the study of anatomy.[3]

Ali ben el Abbas, who carried on the work of Rhazès and who drew up a course of medicine, was equally a *Persian*.

The celebrated Avicenna (Abu Ali Hossein ibn Sinna, 980), was born at Afchanah, in *Persia*. His best known work, the *Kanoun*, is a compilation of the treatises of Galen, from the Syriac versions. In a Latin translation, the Kanoun was very popular in

[1] Leclerc, "Hist. de la Médecine Arabe."
[2] Diguat, "Hist. de la Médecine."
[3] Sedillot, "Hist. des Arabes."

Europe during the Middle Ages, and was looked upon as an original work. Avicenna cared so little for Musulman dogma that he used to drink wine, and recommended its use to others.

The treatises of Albucasis, Avenzoar, and Aben-Bithar, *all three of them natives of Spain*, are also reproductions, more or less faithful, of the writings of Galen, of Aaron, and of the Alexandrine physicians, reproductions made from Syriac translations.

Maimonides, wrongly considered as an Arab doctor, was a *Jew* born at Cordova in 1135. Of a scientific mind, and indifferent to Musulman dogma, he drew upon himself the persecutions of the Almohades, and had to take refuge in Egypt. His *Aphorisms of Medicine* were translated into Latin in 1409; his treatise on the preservation and regulation of health in 1518. It was through them that Greek medical science was known in the Middle Ages.

The Arabs have especially excelled in directions that do not call for great powers of imagination, notably in history and geography. The Syrian and Persian writers supplied them with abundant materials from which they drew without displaying any remarkable critical faculty. This resulted in compilations, often crude, such as the works of Masoudi (956): *Akhbar and Zeman*, history of the time; *Kitab Aousat*, the midway book; *Moroudj-ed-Dheheb oua Maadin-el-Djewahir*, the fields of gold and the mines of precious stones. Such is also the work of Ebn-el-Athir: *Kemal al Taouarikh*, the complete chronicle, beginning with the creation of the world and ending at the year A.D. 1231.

As much might be said of the abridged history of Aboulfeda, the prince diplomat and warrior, who sought relaxation from the anxieties of power in

writing a sort of universal history, of which the first part comprises the patriarchs, the judges, and the kings of Israel; the second, the four dynasties of the ancient kings of Persia; the third, the Pharaohs of Egypt, the kings of Greece, and the Roman Emperors; the fourth, the kings of Arabia before Mahomet; the fifth, the history of various nations, such as the Syrians, the Sabeans, the Copts, the Persians, etc., and the events that happened since the death of Mahomet up to A.D. 1328. This work is only original so far as Arab history is concerned. The same remark applies to the Universal History of the Syrian Aboulfaradj (1226-1286).

Borhan-ed-Din Motarezzi (1145-1235) collected a great number of Arab traditions, affording some curious references to pre-Islamic manners. Of the same *genre* is Nowairi's Historic Encyclopædia of the Arabs, and the History of the Arab Conquest of the Peninsula, by Ebn-el-Kouthiah, and Tabari's Arab History, all original works containing valuable information.[1]

A place apart should be accorded to Ibn-Khaldoun (1332-1406), whose *Annals* contain the history of the Arabs up to the end of the fourteenth century, and that of the Berbers. He is one of the few Musulman writers who is not content with merely compiling from previous documents.

He deals first with historical criticism and its methods; then he studies the community and its origin; gives a succinct description of the globe, and examines the influence which diversity of climate may exert upon man; he then goes into the causes of the development and decadence of States, among nomadic peoples and in the midst of large concentrations of

[1] Silvestre de Sacy, "Anthologie Arabe."

population. He treats of work in general, enumerating the various professions, and finishes with a classification of the sciences. He was born at Tunis, and was of Spanish origin.[1]

In geography, the Arabs have left some works of indisputable originality. Their conquests, the obligation upon them to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and their commercial travels enabled them to make the acquaintance of regions unknown to the Greeks. Their highly developed faculty of observation led them to record valuable information. They gave a faithful transcript of reality; the greater part of their accounts are strictly accurate:[2] such, for instance, as those of Ibn-Batuta, of Ibn-Djobeir, of Ibn-Haukal, of Ibn-Khordadbeg, of Aboul-Feda, of Istakhri, of Bekri, and of Edrisi.

In philosophy, the Arabs, incapable of conceiving any system of their own, adopted those of Greece, of Persia, and of India. It was chiefly through works of the Alexandrine school that they were initiated into this branch of science. The Ptolemies, by their princely liberality, had drawn to this great city numbers of learned men from all parts of the then-known civilized world, notably from Greece, from Syria, and from Persia. These savants, whose works extend from the third to the end of the fifth century, were well acquainted with the various hypotheses to which the human brain had given birth. Thanks to them, Oriental and Greek philosophy—two absolutely different conceptions—were fused together.[3]

Oriental philosophy, represented by Jewish and Christian doctrines, was steeped in a mysticism of which we should have to seek the origin in the

[1] Sedillot, "Hist. des Arabes."
[2] Reinaud, "Introd. à la geogr. d'Abulfeda."
[3] Matter, "Hist. de l'Ecole d'Alexandrie."

religious beliefs of India. Musulman *Sufism*, which came into existence about the second century of the Hegira, seems to derive from Buddhism, and did, as a matter of fact, come from India. Man purified by meditation, trance, and the strict observance of certain rules, could raise himself to the divinity and become identified therewith. It was Sufism that inspired the founders of the various religious brotherhoods of Islam, which are so many manifestations of Oriental mysticism.

Greek philosophy, on the contrary, founded upon reason and logic, is divided into two leading conceptions: the peripateticism of Aristotle and the spiritualism of Plato. It was the Platonic theories that served as the link or bond of union between Greek realism and Oriental mysticism.[1]

Peripateticism was introduced into Alexandria about the second century A.D., by Alexander of Aphrodisias; but, under the influence of Jewish and Christian doctrine, the pure fount of Aristotle was somewhat diverted and defiled. Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, Porphyrius, Themistius, Syrianus, David the Armenian, Simplicius, John Philopon, Jamblichus, were the more or less faithful disciples of Aristotle from whom the Arabs derived their inspiration. The latter knew the works of these authors through the versions and commentaries of the Copts; but they were never in possession of the original works of Aristotle.[2]

It was under such circumstances that the treatises of Honani and of Yahia the grammarian, upon Aristotle, and those of Alkendi, Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Avenpace upon Plato, were written.

[1] Michel Nicolas, "Etudes sur Philon d'Alexandrie"; A. Feuillée, "La philosophie de Platon."

[2] Jules Simon, "Hist. de l'Ecole d'Alexandrie."

The Arabs also knew, through the medium of the commentators of the Alexandrine school,[1] the traditions relating to the Seven Sages and to the minor philosophers; but they copied more especially the works of the successors to Aristotle, particularly those of Themistius, of Alexander Aphrodisias, of Ammonius Saccas, and of Porphyrius.[2] Plotinus and Proclus were held in great esteem among them. The discourses of Apollonius of Thyana, of Plutarch, and of Valentinian were familiar to them. They adopted the ideas of these authors, often distorting them, either because they did not understand them, or because they wished to make them fall in with Musulman dogma; but they added nothing that could be accepted as original.

One of the latest and most celebrated Arab philosophers, Averrhoës, wrote commentaries upon Aristotle, with extracts, that made his reputation at a time when the works of the Greek philosophers were unknown. The system known in the Middle Ages and at the Renaissance by the name of Averrhoïsm has nothing original about it. It is merely a resumé of doctrines common to the Arab peripateticians, and borrowed by them from writers of the Alexandrine school. But Averrhoës had the luck of the last comer, and was considered as the inventor of doctrines which he had only set out in more complete form.[3] As Averrhoës knew no Greek, he knew the writings of Aristotle only through Arabic versions made from Syriac and Coptic translations.

Avicenna, who brought out an Encyclopædia of philosophic science, compiled the works of the Greek peripateticians, and of the Oriental philosophers, from Arabic translations of Syriac versions.[4]

[1] Vacherot, "Hist. critique de l'Ecole d'Alexandrie."
[2] Ravaison, "Essai sur la métaphysique d'Aristote."
[3] Renan, "Averrhoës et l'Averrhoisme."
[4] Mehrens, "La philosophie d'Avicenne."

Oriental philosophy, the mysticism of the Sufis, found its most celebrated interpreter in Al Ghazzali (1058), who borrowed his doctrines from the Jewish and Christian mystics of the School of Alexandria.[1] Whilst recognizing, with Aristotle, the sacred rights of reason, Al Ghazzali held that "the truths established by reason are not the only ones, that there are others to which our understanding is not capable of reaching, that force us to accept them, although we cannot deduce them by the aid of logic from known principles; that there is nothing unreasonable in the supposition that above the sphere of reason there is another sphere, that of divine manifestation, and that, although we may be completely ignorant of its laws and its methods, it is sufficient that reason should be able to admit its possibility."

This is the door open to dreams and wanderings of the spirit. Oriental mysticism was not long in supplanting Greek logic, and the Musulman fanatics received with favour the theories of Al Ghazzali, who became the philosopher of orthodoxy. One of his writings, *Vivification of the sciences of religion*, had such celebrity that it gained him the title of Hojiet-el-Islam, the proof of Islamism.

Between these two philosophical tendencies: the logic of Aristotle and Oriental mysticism, a crowd of secondary influences may be discerned—Byzantine, Egyptian, Persian, or Indian. Each of the subjected nations in turn gave up to the conqueror a portion of its conceptions. The Arab, incapable of drawing anything from his own inner depths, copied, adapted, imitated, and distorted. It is in these foreign influences that must be sought the origin of the religious sects that divided Islam. These sects came

[1] Dugat, "Hist. des philosophes et des théologiens musulmans."

into being wherever the Arab spirit, coming into collision with other religious conceptions, brought about a sort of fusion of doctrines.

Finally, there is not, properly speaking, any Arab philosophy; there are adaptations to the Arab spirit, to the Arab mentality, of Greek, Alexandrine, and Oriental philosophic doctrines; from these adaptations philosophy has gained nothing; its equipment of knowledge has not been increased; its horizon has not been extended. The Arabs have left the doctrines of Aristotle and of the Jewish and Christian philosophers just as they were transmitted to them. They have copied, but they have neither invented nor improved.

It is curious to note that the ablest grammarians, those who have best explained the mechanism and the spirit of the Arabian tongue, are Islamized foreigners, Persians, Syrians, or Egyptians.[1] Sibawaih, Farezi, Zedjadj, Zamakschari are Persian converts. The lexicographers, Ismaïl ben Hammad Djewhri and Firouzabadi are also Persians.

Among the rhetoricians and philologists the majority are either Persians or Syrians, such as Ebn-el-Sekaki, who has been compared with Quintilian for clearness and with Cicero for the richness of his style;[2] or Al Soiouthi, who treats of the purity, the elegance, and the vigour of the Arab language, and joining example to precept, quotes passages from the most esteemed authors as witnesses in support of his dicta.

It is only fair to recognize that the Arabs have produced quite a number of remarkable grammarians. The Arab mind, particularly well adapted to compilation, to minute analysis and to commentaries which

[1] Silvestre de Sacy, "Chrestomathie arabe."
[2] Sedillot, "Hist. des Arabes."

call for little imaginative effort, has found a congenial field in grammatical study.

Treatises both in prose and in verse abound; and all are crammed with quotations, for the proper appreciation of which it would be necessary to know a crowd of writers whose works have not come down to us.

In literature properly so called, in the literature of imagination, even more than in the sciences, the poverty of invention of the Arabs and the barrenness of their minds is made apparent. The only original productions of Arab genius are the *Moallakat*.

From the remotest ages there have been poets in Arabia, a sort of troubadours, who went from tribe to tribe, from market to market, reciting their verses.[1] In those days the most important market was that of Okadh, in the Hedjaz. The poets used to come there to display their talent; there they held literary tourneys, and the poem that was adjudged the best was inscribed in letters of gold and hung up in the temple of the Kaaba. It was this practice that gave the name *Modhahhabat* (gilded), or *Moallakat* (suspended, or more probably, considered as having a great value, from the root, allaka).

The subject, the form and the rhythm are invariably the same. Those that have come down to us, the Moallakat of Imroulkaïs, of Tarafa, of Nabiga and of Amr ibn Kholtoun are compositions of a hundred lines each. The author celebrates his native country and his sweetheart; he bewails his distant separation from them; then he boasts of his own exploits, praises his horse, his arms, and turns his enemies into ridicule. They are exact pictures of

[1] Larroque, "Voyage dans la Palestine."

the nomad, warlike life of the Bedouins before Mahomet's time. Their literary value is about equal to that of the ballads of our own trouvères.[1]

Then there are some songs collected in the Kitab el Aghani, belonging to a period a little later than the Moallakat: the complaints of a lover separated from his mistress, or rejected by her; the martial strains of a warrior; clamourings for vengeance; the glorification of a tribe, or of a feat of arms; insults addressed to an enemy. These little pieces recall our own ballads of the Middle Ages. This is about all that can be attributed to Arab genius, to its personal inspiration.

Immediately after the death of Mahomet, when the Arabs were precipitated by their conquests into the midst of peoples more civilized and more refined than themselves, their literature was not long in showing the effect of foreign influence. In contact with Byzantines and Persians, the poets, like the warriors, became more effeminate. They sang no longer of battles or of vengeance; they changed themselves into courtiers, and sang the praises of the Caliph and of influential personages from whom they hoped to receive favours and presents. To please the all-powerful master, who lived in the style of a King of Persia or of a Byzantine Emperor, in the midst of luxury and pleasure, they sang of good cheer, of wine and the love of women. As these subjects lack variety, they endeavoured to brighten them up by a studied refinement of expression, by virtuosity of style, by the use of archaic and erudite expressions, by flashes of wit and the play upon words.

Such was Arab literature in the time of the Ommeyads and of the earlier Abbassides, when

[1] Caussin de Perceval, "Hist. des Arabes avant l'Islamisme."

Motanebbi, Ibn Doreid, Abu l'Oli, and Omar Ibn Faradh were its principal representatives.

From the time of the Caliphates of Haroun-al-Raschid and El Mamoun, when the Arabs were initiated into Greek scientific knowledge through Syriac and Arabic translations of the works of antiquity, their literature became exclusively didactic. Their poets composed in verse treatises on grammar, on prosody, on astronomy, on mathematics and on jurisprudence. These efforts have no more original value than the prose works of their scientific writers. They are compilations made from Syriac versions; and this literature, which embraces several centuries, reveals the poverty of the Arab spirit and its powerlessness to draw forth anything from its own inner consciousness.

Fable and allegory occupy an important place in this literature. Here again the Arabs merely reproduce the compositions of India, Persia and Greece, adapting them to their own mentality and the dogma of Islam. *Calila and Dimla* is a translation from the Persian; the fables of Lokman are copied from those of India and Greece; they were very probably compiled by a Christian of Syria.

The few Arab romances that have come down to us are likewise of foreign inspiration. The elements of intrigue and of the supernatural in the *Thousand and One Nights* are borrowed from the Persian; only the scenes of Arab life are original, and they are realistic representations without imaginative embellishment.[1] The same may be said of the *Romance of Antar*, a sort of prose epic depicting the warlike life of the Bedouins.

Epic and dramatic poetry, which depend upon

[1] Dozy, "Hist. des Musulmans d'Espagne."

high imaginative gifts, do not exist among the Arabs, a further proof of their poverty of imagination.

There was in Arab literature one incomparable period: the Andalusian period. Under the Ommeyads of Spain, the Arab language was used to express original thought, a thing that had never happened to it before. Richness of invention, abundance of natural feeling, freshness of expression, fine and delicate ideas, such are the characteristics of the poems of this epoch. Unfortunately, they are not of Arab but of Latin inspiration. The greater part of these poems were composed by Islamized Andalusians, that is to say, by pure Latins; the rest by Arabs born in Spain who had received Latin culture. We can see the Latin genius shining through their productions; we find in them impulses of imagination, feelings expressed with a grace and delicacy unknown to the best Arab writers. As a historian has remarked:[1] at the bottom of their heart there always remains something pure, delicate and spiritual that is not Arab.

In modern times, Arab literature has remained sterile; since the later Abbasside Caliphs it has produced no work worthy of remark; it has lived and still lives on its past.

In the schools, otherwise exclusively religious, they continue to read the Koran and the commentators thereon, as well as the old works on jurisprudence and grammar; but no educated Arab appears to be capable of producing a new work. So, then, the Musulman community, fixed in the contemplation of the past, feels no need to think otherwise than did the generations that have preceded it. Islam, a secretion of the Arab brain, has paralysed

[1] Dozy, *op. cit.*

their minds and has set up an impassable barrier between the Musulman and the rest of the world.

In the fine arts, the Arabs have shown no more originality than in science and letters; in sculpture and painting their nullity is absolute.[1] A reason for this inferiority has been sought in the religious law which forbids the representation of living things. But the Koran only expresses this prohibition in one single passage, and even there in somewhat vague terms: "O believers, wine, games of chance, *statues*, and the drawing of lots are abominations invented by Satan. Abstain from these and you shall be happy."[2]

It is almost certain that by the word *statues* the Koran meant representations of the pagan divinities, that is, idols. It is the old commandment of the Decalogue: "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image . . . thou shalt not worship them." Mahomet never dreamt of forbidding the artistic imitation of living things in painting and sculpture. In the Arab text, the word *statue* is rendered by *ansab*, the plural of *nasb*, a word that means a *carved stone* in a place consecrated to a protecting divinity. In another passage in the Koran the word *nasb* is used to mean *altar*. That is just the meaning it has in the passage we are dealing with. It is, therefore, by an error of interpretation that the commentators have extended this word to include statues and the representations of living things. This narrow interpretation has not been accepted by all Musulmans. Both in Persia and in India forms of living things are often found in the arabesques. Makrizi records that Maowiah caused himself to be represented on the coinage girt with a sword.[3]

[1] Prisse d'Avesne, "L'art arabe."
[2] Koran, Ch. V, v. 92.
[3] Makrizi, "Monnaies musulmanes." trad. de Silvestre de Sacy; Victor Langlois, "Numismatique des Arabes avant l'Islamisme."

It is only fair to point out that poetry has been far worse treated in the Koran than sculpture; and yet that has not hindered the Arabs from cultivating it: "Shall I tell you," we read in the revealed Book, "which are the men upon whom the demons descend and whom they inspire. They descend upon every liar taken in the act and teaching what their ears have picked up. But, the greater part lie. *These are the poets* whom erring men follow in their turn. Do you not see that they follow all roads like madmen, that they say what they do not do?"[1]

But poetry has continued to blossom in spite of the maledictions of the Prophet. It is not, therefore, unreasonable to suppose that if sculpture and painting have not been developed, it is because the Arabs have no aptitude for them. A further proof lies in the fact that they did not practise these arts in the days before Islam, when they must have been cognisant of them through their relations with Romans, Greeks, Egyptians and Persians. Their artistic nullity must, therefore, be attributed, not to the religious law, but to their national inaptitude. The religious law is nothing but the expression of the Arab spirit, and so it has treated with disdain what the Arab despises as being beyond his powers.

In architecture, there is no sign of Arab originality.[2] The nomadic Bedouin never troubled about it, for he lived in a tent. In towns like Mecca and Medina, the architecture was of a primitive character, with mud walls and roofs of palm leaves. The famous temple of the Kaaba was merely a modest enclosure of stone and sun-dried mud bricks. The first mosque that Mahomet built at Medina, after his

[1] Koran, Ch. XXVII, v. 221.
[2] Gayet, "L'art arabe."

flight from Mecca, was a very humble construction in sun-dried brick.[1]

The Arabs only became acquainted with architecture when they left their native country; in Syria and Persia they saw Byzantine and Persian monuments, in both cases inspired by Greek art.[2] The Greeks were the great initiators of the East in architectural matters; it was they who constructed the greater number of the palaces of the kings of Persia, and it was from them, finally, that the Arabs drew their inspiration. The dome, so wide-spread in Musulman countries, is of Persian origin; it was adopted by the Greeks, and then by the Byzantines. Syrian architects, combining Greek art with that of Persia, have contributed to the creation of what has come to be called Byzantine art. It was the Syrian, Anthemios of Tralles, who drew the plans of Santa Sophia (532-537), in which we find all the characteristics of the art wrongly attributed to the Arabs: the dome, lacework in stone, mosaics, coloured tiles, and "arabesques." But the dome had long been in use in Persia, as is proved by the dome of the Hall of Audience of Chosroës I., and that of the palace of Machita, built by Chosroës II. It was Persia that invented the arch; all the domed and arched work in the world sprang from Persia. The dome and the arch were known in Rome from the first century; the most ancient examples of them are to be found at Tivoli, in Hadrian's villa, and also in the Baths of Caracalla, in Rome.

Those mural decorations, which were afterwards called Arabesques, had their origin in Greece and Egypt. The immense halls with ceiling supported

[1] Bourgoin, "Précis de l'art arabe."
[2] Bayet, "L'art Byzantin."

by a forest of columns are equally of Greek origin. The great Mosque at Cordova, and the Alhambra at Granada are the products of Greco-Latin art, like the embossing and the cut-plaster-work of their walls and ceilings.[1]

It was long believed that our mediaeval artists had come under the influence of Arab art. We now know that this was not the case, not only because there was no such thing as Arab art, properly speaking, but also because it was not through the intervention of the Arabs that Oriental art was introduced into France. The numerous objects found in church treasuries, and which have been wrongly attributed to the Arabs, in reality owe nothing to them; such as still remain have been identified and leave no possibility of doubt in this respect. For example, a piece of ivory representing an Eastern King squatting on an elephant, is a chessman of Hindu workmanship; the bowls are Persian; the sword of Charlemagne, preserved in the Louvre, is of Persian workmanship. The precious materials used to wrap up relics, such as the shroud of Saint Victor or that of Saint Siviard, at Sens, are Persian fabrics; another, decorated with a frieze of elephants, which may be found at the Louvre comes from India. It was *Persian art* that the Crusades brought to us, the art of the period of the Sassanian kings, that is to say, of an epoch of Persian reaction against the Arabs.

But Oriental art was introduced into France well before the Arab invasion, and indeed before the Crusades, by the Greeks and Syrians who were to be found trading to Narbonne, to Bordeaux, to

[1] Kondakof, "Hist. de l'art Byzantin."

Lyons, and even as far as Metz, in the time of the Merovingians.[1]

In the fifth and sixth centuries, France came under the influence of Byzantine art. Sculpture in low relief, arabesques, and the sculptured lacework which were in fashion in the sixth century, came from Persia and from Syria; their origin goes back to the Assyrian and Egyptian artists.

The discoveries of Foucher at Gandhara have made known that it was the Greeks who followed in Alexander's train who taught Asia the principles of bas relief.

In music, the Arabs have shown the same nullity as in other branches of the fine arts. In a general way, the Musulmans considered it as a mercenary art, putting it in the same class as dancing.[2] Ibn-Khaldoun, in his *Prolegomena*, speaks of it with a certain contempt: "We know," he says, "that Maowiah reproached his son Yézid severely for being so fond of vocal music, and that he forbade him to indulge in it." And in another passage: "One day, I reproached an Emir of royal birth for his eagerness to learn music, and I said to him:

"'That is not your business and does not become your dignity.'

"'How is that?' he replied. 'Don't you know that Ibrahim the son of El Mahdi (the third Abbasside Caliph), excelled in this art, and was the first singer of his day?'

"'By Allah!' I answered him. 'Why do you not rather take his father as your model, or his brother? Don't you know that this passion caused Ibrahim to fall below the rank held by his family?'"

[1] Louis Gillet, "Hist. des arts."
[2] Salvador Daniel, "La musique arabe."

The song and the dance were held in but light esteem in both Rome and Greece; and, as the Arabs imitated the fashions of Greco-Latin civilization, it is not impossible that they adopted its prejudices against music.[1]

Throughout Musulman history the constant operation of two conflicting influences may be noted. On the one hand it is the influence of foreign nations hastily converted to Islam, the Syrians, Persians, Hindus, Egyptians, and Andalusians who tend to introduce their foreign civilization into Islam. At the periods when this influence is preponderant, there is a great expansion of culture, with the Arabs standing, as it were, outside, and which is accomplished in spite of them.

On the other hand, there is the influence exercised by Arab elements, hostile to all progress, to any innovation. Incapable of conceiving any better state, the Arab intends to remain as he is, a shepherd, a soldier or a wanderer. Other nations are urging him to civilization, he resists them with all his forces —with the inertia of his apathy, his ignorance and his intellectual paralysis. When he is in the ascendant, he arrests all forward movement; gradually, by means of his religion, he introduces his mentality and his conceptions into the manners and customs of the subject peoples; and in the course of a few generations he succeeds in afflicting them with his own paralysis and stagnation.

These two influences have opposed each other for centuries, with varying fortunes. In the end, the Arab influence, supported by material force, has carried the day, to the ruin of all civilization.

[1] Yacoub Artin Pasha, "L'instruction publique en Egypte."

CHAPTER XIV

The psychology of the Musulman—Steadfast faith in his intellectual superiority—Contempt and horror of what is not Musulman—The world divided into two parts: believers and infidels—Everything that proceeds from infidels is detestable—The Musulman escapes all propaganda—By mental reservation he even escapes violence—Check to the attempts to introduce Western civilization into the Musulman world—Averrhoës.

FROM the point at which we have arrived in this essay, it is not impossible to understand and to explain the psychology of the Arab, and consequently of the Musulman. For the Musulman, whoever he may be, subjected for centuries to the religious law, in itself an expression of the Arab mind, has received so deep an impression from it as to have become totally Arabized. To understand the psychology of the Arab, the mechanism of his brain, is by the same token to account for the psychology of any given Musulman. The African Berber thinks on the same lines, and acts on the same lines as the Syrian, the Turk, the Persian, the Cossack, or the native of Java. All these people being Islamized think and behave as the Arab does.

The religious law, of Arab inspiration, that has been imposed upon the Musulman world, has had the effect of imparting to the very diverse individuals of whom that world is composed, a unity of thought, of feeling, of conceptions and of judgment. The scale that has served to measure this thought, these

feelings, etc., is an Arab scale; and consequently the minds of all Musulmans have been levelled down to the stature of the Arab mind.

The chief characteristic of the Arab, and therefore of the Musulman, is a fixed belief in his own intellectual superiority. Incapable as he is, through the barrenness of his mind and the poverty of his imagination, of conceiving any other condition than his own, any other mode of thought, he firmly believes that he has arrived at an unequalled pitch of perfection; that he is the sole possessor of the true faith, of the true doctrine, the true wisdom; that he alone is in possession of the truth, no relative truth subject to revision, but truth intangible, imperfectible —absolute Truth. As an example of this pretentious claim, we may quote one of the most influential members of the Committee of Union and Progress, Sheik Abd-ul-Hack, a civilized Young Turk; writing a few years ago in a Musulman review, published in Paris, he said: "Yes! the Musulman religion is in open hostility to all your world of progress. Understand, you European observers, that a Christian, whatever his position may be, by the mere fact of his being a Christian is regarded by us as a blind man lost to all sense of human dignity. Our reasoning with regard to him is as simple as it is definitive. We say: the man whose judgment is so perverted as to deny the existence of a one and only God, and to make up gods of different sorts, can only be the meanest expression of human degradation; to speak to him would be a humiliation for our intelligence and an insult to the grandeur of the Master of the Universe. The presence of such miscreants among us is the bane of our existence; their doctrine is a direct insult to the purity of our faith; contact with

them is a defilement of our bodies; any relation with them a torture to our souls. Though detesting you, we have condescended to study your political institutions and your military organization. Over and above the new weapons that Providence procures for us through your agency, you have yourselves rekindled the inextinguishable faith of our heroic martyrs. Our Young Turks, our Babis, our new Brotherhoods, all our sects, under various forms, are inspired by the same idea, the same necessity of moving forward. Towards what end? Christian civilization? Never! Islam is one great *international* family. All true believers are brothers. A community of feeling and of faith binds them in mutual affection. It is for the Caliph to facilitate these relations and to rally the Faithful under the sacerdotal standard."[1]

Convinced that he is *the elect of God* (Moustafa), assured that his people is the one nation chosen among all others by the divinity, the Musulman has the certitude of being the only one called to enjoy the celestial rewards. And so, for those who do not think as he does, for the wanderers who do not follow the straight way, he feels a pity made up of contempt for their intellectual inferiority, of horror for their decadence, and of compassion for the frightful future of punishment that awaits them.

This conviction, which nothing can weaken, inspires the Musulman with an inalienable attachment to his traditions. Outside Islam there can be no safety; outside its law, no truth, no happiness. The evolution of foreign nations, the increasing accumulations of their knowledge, scientific progress,

[1] This declaration appeared in *Le Mecheroutiste*, a review edited by Sherif Pasha, Paris, August, 1912.

the improvements effected by human effort in material well-being leave him indifferent. He is the *Believer*, *par excellence*, the superior, the perfect Being.

This conception, as has been truly remarked,[1] divides the world into two parts: *Believers* and *Infidels*. The Believer is in a state of perpetual war with the Infidel, and this right, this duty of eternal war can only be suspended: "Make war," says the Holy Book, "on those who believe neither in God nor in the last judgment, who do not regard as forbidden what God and his Prophet have forbidden, on those who do not profess the true religion, until they, humbled in spirit, shall pay tribute with their own hands."

The Musulman, convinced of his own superiority, will not suffer any teaching. As typical of his mode of reasoning, we may quote the words of a Young Tunisian, Béchir Sfar: "The North of Africa is inhabited by an amalgam of peoples who claim descent from a celebrated race, the Arab race, and who profess a religion of unity, the Musulman religion. Now, this race and this religion conquered and colonized an empire more vast than the Roman Empire. The North Africans alone have to their credit sixty years of domination in the South of France, eight centuries in Spain, and three centuries in Sicily. . . . This slight digression is made with the object of recalling to those who might be tempted to forget it that we belong to a race, to a religion, and to a civilization equal in historical glory and in the force of assimilation to any other race whatever, to any other religion or civilization of ancient or modern peoples."[2]

[1] Snouck Hurgronje, "Musulman Law."
[2] Bechir Sfar, "Les Habous en Tunisie."

Intellectually, the Musulman is, nevertheless, a paralytic; his brain, subjected in the course of centuries to the rough discipline of Islam, is closed to all that has not been foreseen, announced and specified by the religious law. He is, therefore, systematically hostile to all novelty, to all modification, to all innovation.

Whatever exists has been created by the will of the Almighty. It is not for man to modify His work. If God had wished that what exists should be different, he would have made it so, irrespective of all human volition. To act is thus, to some extent, to misunderstand the divine decisions, to wish to substitute human desires for them, to commit an act of insubordination. Such a conception puts all progress out of the question; and, in fact, immobility is the essential characteristic of every Musulman community.

As has been remarked, "the Musulman, remaining faithful to his religion, has not progressed; he has remained stationary in a world of swiftly moving modern forces. It is, indeed, one of the salient features of Islamism that it immobilizes in their native barbarism the races whom it enslaves. It is fixed in a crystallization inert and impenetrable. It is unchangeable; and political, social or economic changes have no repercussion upon it."[1]

Renan has shown that the Semites were incapable of rising to the conception of a general idea. A Musulman would willingly associate with Europeans in Christian anti-clericalism, but he would never tolerate the least attempt against his own belief. One instance, among a hundred others, may be given of this assertion: Some years ago there met at

[1] Besson. "La législation civile de l'Algérie."

Algiers an Oriental Congress, at which European, Egyptian and Turkish savants were present. They dealt first with biblical exegesis. Certain linguists sought to prove that several passages in the Old Testament were apochryphal and that they had consequently no historic value. Nobody protested. But, when these same savants wished to exercise their erudition and their critical powers upon the Koran, their Musulman colleagues protested with the most lively indignation against what they considered as sacrilege. The discussion became so heated that the Governor-General had to intervene.

As has been seen, the Musulman escapes from all propaganda; he even escapes from violence, because Islam authorizes him to bow for the time before superior force, when circumstances require it. The religious law in no way imposes upon him an attitude which might expose him to danger or to reprisals. It even permits him, in case of extreme peril, to transgress the dogmas. The commentators on the Koran quote numerous examples of this liberty: Ammar Ben Yasir was excused by the Prophet himself for outwardly praising pagan gods and insulting Mahomet, at a time when in his heart he was firmly attached to the Musulman religion. This procedure was admitted by the earlier doctors of the Law. Afterwards, it was recommended to employ ambiguous expressions as far as possible, words of double meaning, to give less force to these denials. The practice was called *taqiyyah*, after a passage in the Koran.[1] It was used by the Shiites in their constant propaganda against the Ommeyads.

We even find *taqiyyah* used to satisfy private

[1] Ch. III, v. 27.

interests, in oaths for instance; it consists in the use of words with a double meaning or in mental reservation.[1] The Musulman may, therefore, bend to foreign authority when he is not strong enough to resist; he may even make terms with it, and accept titles and favours; but, as soon as he feels himself in a position to revolt, he should immediately do so; it is an imperative duty.

In the twelfth century, Averrhoës wanted to Islamize Greek knowledge, in order to incorporate it into Islam. He was looked upon as an ungodly man and was persecuted.[2] In modern times, the same attempts have been made from time to time, and have ended in the same failure. It is not without profit to dwell upon these efforts, as they explain the poverty of the results attained by the efforts of European nations in Musulman countries: France in North Africa; England in India and Egypt; Holland in Sumatra; and Italy in Tripolitania.

The various societies for social emancipation, Masonic Lodges, League of the Rights of Man, Educational League, the Positivist Society, etc., have, since the middle of the nineteenth century, multiplied their efforts to spread their liberal doctrines among Musulmans. They have failed in their task because the neophytes to whom they addressed themselves were not sincere. Those who seemed completely emancipated showed, at the touch-stone of events, that they had preserved their prejudices, their hatreds, and their Oriental mentality entire. A curious example may be quoted: A member of all the Societies of free thinkers, and notably of the Positivist Committee, of which he was the delegate

[1] Snouck Hurgronje, "Musulman Law."
[2] Renan, "Averrhoës et l'Averrhoisme."

for Turkey, Ahmed Riza, in his newspaper *Michveret*, covered with obloquy the means of government employed by Abd-ul-Hamid; he demanded liberty of the Press; he proclaimed the equality of the races of the Empire, and the necessity of the existence of political parties; in this, he spoke as a free thinker, as a disciple of the French Revolution. But he changed his note as soon as he was in power. As president of the Ottoman Chamber, he had no word of pity for the victims, no word of indignation for the assassins, after the massacres of Adana, when more than twenty thousand Armenians were done to death; he allowed the new law against the Press to be voted, which suppressed all independence of thought in Turkey. In July, 1910, he silenced those liberals in the Chamber who demanded the abolition of the state of siege that had been in force since the revolution of the 13th April, he raised no protest against the executions of liberal politicians by court martial. In Paris, he declared himself a free thinker, but at Constantinople, he regularly performed the "namaz" (prayer) in the Chamber, so as to assure the religious party of his profound faith.

More recently, in 1922-1923, the government of Angora furnished a fresh example of incurable Musulman fanaticism. This Government, which claims to be actuated by modern ideas, deposed the Sultan whom it accused of making terms with foreigners and of not showing himself sufficiently firm in defence of the interests of Islam. One of its members, Abeddin Bey, deputy for Logiztan, tore off his neck-tie in the tribune and made the assembly, before rising, vote the prohibition of the use of wearing apparel made abroad. Other deputies declared their determination to restore the faith to

its primitive austerity. They demanded punishments for Turkish women of easy virtue who sold their favours to infidels. They made the wearing of the orthodox head-dress obligatory; they forbade the use of alcohol, and even of wine; they decreed the closing of the European schools. During the war against the Greeks, the Turkish journals called the Musulman soldiers: *Moujahid* (from *Djihad*, holy war), that is to say *combatants for the faith, soldiers of the holy war;* and those who fell on the field of battle, *Chahid*, i.e., *martyrs*.

One might multiply examples to prove that the Musulman is beyond the reach of foreign influences; that, in spite of appearances, he preserves his peculiar mentality, his profound faith, his deep-rooted hatreds; that he is refactory to all civilization.

The Musulman community can neither be modified nor improved; it is crystallized in an unassailable formula; its ideal is exclusively religious, or rather, it is twofold: one half religious, the other political—*Mahdism* and the *Caliphate*.[1]

Mahdism is the realization on earth of religious aspirations, through the intervention of a personage chosen by the divinity—the Mahdi; it is the supremacy of the Islamic faith over all other religions.

The *Caliphate* is the ideal of the Islamic State, placed under the sceptre of a Caliph. It is the liberation of the Musulman peoples bowed beneath the infidel yoke; it is the restoration of the defunct splendour of the Musulman Empire, such as it was under the successors of the Prophet, under the Ommeyads and the Abbassides.[2]

[1] Servier, "Le Nationalisme musulman"
[2] Montet, "De l'état present et de l'avenir de l'Islam."

These two forms of the Musulman ideal are not always in perfect accord: they sometimes clash, although, after all, their aim is identical, namely, the triumph of Islam.

The hopes of the Caliphites centre by preference upon the most powerful independent Sultan, who is the protector and the natural champion of Islam; at the present moment it is the Ottoman Sultan; but the office and the sentiments upon which it rests are always international.

The Mahdist movements, on the contrary, are essentially the expression of local discontent. It is the Musulman form of that hatred which among all nations and at all times arrays the conquered against their conquerors. So long as Islam exists, the Mahdist doctrine will be the spark that may at any moment set ablaze the discontent of the natives. There is no colonial policy capable of indefinitely avoiding these fatal sentiments and the sudden troubles to which they may give rise.

The doctrine of the Caliphate, on the other hand, is essentially political; it is of a higher, more complex order; its conception calls for a more developed intellectual culture; it is that of the Young Turks, of the Young Egyptians, of the Young Tunisians, of the Young Algerians; and to-morrow, it will be that of the Young Moroccans, as soon as the instruction now being given in the French schools shall have partially civilized the natives of Morocco. At the outset, the Caliphate idea was religious, like every other manifestation of the Musulman spirit; but it was not long in extending its borders to embrace politics, and to dream of a formidable Musulman power, which should present itself finally as a quasi-laic restoration of the vanished Oriental civilization, in

opposition to the Christian civilization of Europe.[1] In other words, it is Musulman nationalism; all the faithful of Islam forming part of one ideal country.

The strangest part of it is that this doctrine of the Caliphate has borrowed its essential principles from Europe. At the time of the fall of Abdul-Hamid, the Young Turks firmly believed that they were reviving the French Revolution; a number of them were Freemasons. One of the masters to whom they appealed, Al Afghani Leijed-Djemmal-ed-Din al-Husseini, who died in 1897, belonged to an Egyptian Lodge; he was honoured by the friendship of Renan, who has devoted a eulogistic note to him, reproduced in his *Essays*.

Ahmed Riza Bey and Dr. Nazim, two influential members of the C.U.P., used to belong to the Positivist Society of France; but both of them have kept their Musulman mentality, in spite of appearances.

Sawas Pasha, an Ottoman Christian and a liberal thinker, but who thinks as a Christian and not as a Musulman, says, in his *Studies on the theory of Musulman Law:* "One can render not only acceptable to, but even compulsory on the Musulman conscience all progress, all truth, every legal disposition, not hitherto accepted by the Mahometan community or inscribed in its Law."

Attempts to civilize the Musulmans, inspired by this formula, ended in failure, because they came into collision with a religion fiercely conservative and an intransigent fanaticism. It may be admitted that, theoretically, fanaticism is not incurable; but it has to be recognized nevertheless that Musulman fanaticism is absolutely irreducible. That is why the

[1] Khairallah.

effort of the Young Turk party towards progress was, from the outset, checked by the mass of the faithful, hostile to all innovation. To maintain itself in power, this party was obliged to deny the principles it had in the first instance proclaimed.

The revolutionary idea had germinated in the minds of the Jewish and Christian populations subject to Turkey; and it was they who prepared the movement of emancipation; but as soon as it became an accomplished fact and the Musulman Turks attempted to set up regular authority, they reverted to the narrow ideas of religious nationalism and fanaticism. The formidable insurrection in the Yemen, which tended to the dethronement of the Sultan of Turkey in favour of a Caliph of Arab race, was nothing but a movement of reaction against new ideas: against Western ideas. It may be compared to the Wahabite movement, and had the same object—the restoration of Islam to its original purity, by ridding it of European admixture.

More recently, the popular movement which committed the actual direction of the Ottoman Empire to the government of Angora, was inspired by identical sentiments, and the first act of the government was to depose the Sultan on the ground of too great a complaisance towards foreigners.

One of the most eminent Orientalists of the present day, Snouck Hurgronje, whose works have thrown a startling light upon the psychology of Musulman nations, has proved irrefutably the falsity of the theories of Sawas Pasha.[1] It will be useful to sum up his argument:

The Creed and the Law of Islam have become in the course of their evolution less and less flexible; the

[1] Snouck Hurgronje, "Musulman Law."

political and social happenings of modern times afford ample proof of this. The question is not what we, with our methods of reasoning, are going to do with the dogmas of Islam, but rather what Islam itself, following its own doctrine and its own history, wishes to deduce from them.

Islam would have to deny *in toto* its historic past to enter upon the path traced for it by Sawas Pasha. Doubtless, whether they like it or not, the Musulmans have to accommodate themselves gradually to the manners and institutions proceeding from modern Europe; but it is not to be imagined that the juridical theory, springing from the very heart of Mahometan populations, which has maintained itself against all contrary influences, is going to yield to-day to any action coming from outside. Islam, as soon as it sees itself attacked, withdraws to its strongest positions.

The Musulman certainly makes some concessions which do not affect any religious principle: for instance, he accepts the railway, the telegraph, the steamship; but the civilization which has produced these things, together with its legislative principles, is, for all the faithful, an abomination that they will only tolerate under compulsion. As for the young men educated in French schools, they calmly superpose foreign science upon their traditional faith, without making any attempt to reconcile the two.

Islam forms a block of intangible traditions, of prejudices, of bigoted faith. The Musulman, bound by his religion, cannot accept Western progress. The two civilizations are too different, too much opposed ever to admit of mutual interpenetration.

CHAPTER XV

Islam in conflict with European nations—The Nationalist movement in Egypt—Its origin—The National Party—Moustafa Kamel Pasha—Mohammed Farid Bey—The popular party—Loufti Bey es Sayed—The party of constitutional reform—Sheikh Aly Yousef—The attitude of England—Egyptian Nationlist's intrigues in North Africa.

IN contact with Western nations, the Musulman has remained stationary, and has made no effort to adapt himself and his institutions to the requirements of modern times. Under the protection of his intransigent faith, he has not allowed any outside influence to affect him; on the contrary, his hostility towards the infidel is more bitter than ever. The semi-education he has received in European schools has only served to strengthen his hatred by leading him to imagine that he can do without foreign guidance. It is in response to this feeling that the Musulman Nationalist Party has been created, which has succeeded in setting the True Believer against the Infidel in every land governed or protected by a European State. The aim of this party is the re-establishment of Islamic power and the expulsion of the foreigner. It is a new form of Panislamism, and a more dangerous form, inasmuch as it aims at a practical object immediately realizable, and has realist rather than visionary tendencies.

This movement of emancipation came to birth in Egypt, as a reaction against English domination. Its

leading spirit was Moustafa Kamel Pasha, who, on the 22nd October, 1907, secured the unanimous adoption at Alexandria of the programme of the Egyptian National Party of which he was the leader, namely: "The Egyptians for Egypt, Egypt for the Egyptians." He added these words: "We are the despoiled, the English are the despoilers. We wish our country to be free, under the spiritual dominion of the Commander of the Faithful." But Moustafa Kamel had no time to take action; death cut him off on the 10th February, 1908, at the very outset of his undertaking.

This was taken up by his successor in the presidency of the Egyptian National Party, Mohammed Farid Bey, who, betaking himself to the most astute methods of Oriental policy, tried to secure the support of England's rivals among the European Powers. This shows that the Young Egyptians were fully aware of their own incapacity to free themselves from foreign tutelage by their own unaided efforts. They set their hopes first upon France. Moustafa Kamel had addressed a vehement appeal to the Chambre des Deputés, on 4th June, 1895; but the Chamber had not thought the time propitious for intervention. The Young Egyptians then tried to create a movement of public opinion in France, where they found many willing to listen to them. How could it be otherwise: how could one distrust men who protested their contempt and hatred of England, and in the same breath claimed to regard France as their spiritual home?

It was a curious spectacle and one that showed up the subtlety of Oriental duplicity, to see the Young Egyptians placing themselves under the ægis of France in order to intrigue against England, whilst

the Young Tunisians and the Young Algerians addressed themselves to the English, at the time of the Fashoda affair, and to the Germans during the Tangier incident, in the hope of getting rid of France. Have we not here a proof that the Musulman never has any feeling of gratitude to those who have tried to raise him out of his barbarism, and that convinced of the superiority of his own civilization, in spite of its decadence, he still hopes to be able to make it prevail once more?[1]

Having lost all hope of any intervention by France, the partisans of Egyptian emancipation turned to Germany, who from 1900 onwards had been cultivating intrigues with all Musulman malcontents for the supposed benefit of their foreign policy.

Moustafa Kamel and Farid Bey devoted themselves especially to the education of their party, and to preparing the minds of their followers for the idea of revolt. Their plan was to make the foreigner unpopular, to represent him as an invader and a usurper, to show the legitimacy of rebellion against his authority, to inspire the Musulmans with proud confidence in their own strength by recalling to them the power of the Empire of the Caliphs. Before proceeding to action, it would be well to convince their minds of the necessity and the possibility of action; this conviction once established, there might be some hope of realization.

With this object, the People's Party was founded, with Loufti Bey es Sayed as leader, and a simple programme, namely: to obtain step by step the maximum of liberty, up to the final expulsion of the foreigner; to make use of the encouragement and the efforts of England to conquer her in the sequel by

[1] Lord Cromer. Report to Sir Edward Grey, May, 1906.

means of the weapons which she herself would have forged. Education being the most efficacious arm, the English were to be urged to multiply schools, especially purely native schools; to replace the European teachers by Egyptians. Later on, when the protected people were convinced as to their rights, it would only be necessary to array them against their protectors.

This policy, which tends to raise ruse and dissimulation to a system of action, almost to a fine art, should not astonish us; for it is in exact accordance with the commandments of the Faith. The true believer is in a state of permanent war with the infidel, and this law, this duty of eternal war can only be suspended. "Make war," says the Holy Book, "on those who do not profess the true religion, until they, in their humiliation, shall pay the tribute with their own hands." This formula explains the attitude of the partisans of emancipation, whether in Egypt, in Tunis, or in Algiers.

A third party, that of *Constitutional Reform*, was founded by Sheikh Aly Youssef, the editor of *Al Moayad.* He advocated the maintenance of the Khedivial authority according to the spirit of the Sultan's Firmans; the creation of a national parliament; free and general primary instruction, in the Arabic language, that being established as the official language; and the admission of Egyptians to administrative appointments.

The foundation of the reform advocated by Sheikh Aly Youssef is the establishment of Arabic as the official language for education in the schools of Egypt. By this means the English teachers would be driven away, and the influence exercised, through their intermediary, by the conquering people on the

protected people, would be suppressed. Education being given exclusively in Arabic, the rising generation would be preserved from all dangerous contact with Western ideas. Their minds could be moulded into any desired form; nationalism and religious fanaticism could be cultivated in them; they would thus become good and ardent Musulmans, with little instruction perhaps, but sufficiently tamed, as it were, to obey blindly the orders of the reformers, and at their bidding to hurl themselves against the English invaders. Finally, these trustworthy subjects, on leaving school, would enter into the different services of the administration where they would gradually take the place of foreigners.

This first step taken, it would then only be necessary to create a Parliament, a simple matter since the minds of the young generation would have been prepared for it. A Parliament obtained, intrigues would be set to work with the great Powers who were England's rivals, and advantage would be taken of troublous times, of a mutiny in India, of a war in Europe, of any events that would compel the protecting Power to direct its attention and its forces elsewhere, to launch the movement of rebellion and drive out the invader.

England fell into this trap; wishing to show her benevolence towards Egypt, she began the realization of part of the reforms advocated by Sheikh Aly Youssef. Notably in all that concerned education she endeavoured to make it, as far as possible, conformable to the mentality, the traditions, and the customs of Musulman people; she set up schools for the exclusive use of natives, in which the instruction was given in Arabic. A commission composed of the most eminent personalities of the religious and

political world of Egypt was entrusted with the translation into Arabic of the principal scholastic manuals of Europe, at the same time adapting them to the prescriptions of the Koran. The Commission in this way founded a library comprising treatises on geography, history, physics, chemistry, natural history, etc., drawn up in Arabic with the usual religious formulæ. For the accomplishment of this imposing task the Committee made use of the works of the Arab savants of the Middle Ages, from which they borrowed the technical terms and scientific definitions, so that the Young Egyptian can acquire practical knowledge in his own vernacular.

We know how he has shown his gratitude for this generous consideration: the rising generation, educated by England, and who, without her help, would have remained in the depths of their ignorance, have arrayed themselves against her; and now, under the delusion that they are capable of governing themselves, their one idea is to shake off all foreign tutelage.

Such are the origin and the tendencies of the Nationalist movement in Egypt, very briefly set out. The theories of the promoters of the movement, gradually spread abroad by means of the instruction given in the schools set up by England, are now enlisting the people of Egypt against their protectors, and are from day to day giving rise to serious difficulties.

England, breaking away from her customary egoism, has done her best to extend education among the Egyptian people, and to develop their prosperity in conformity with the principles and practices of civilized countries. Her efforts have only led to negative results.

The Young Egyptians, educated by England, at England's expense, in English schools, have ranged themselves against her in the name of Islam, and to the cry of: "Egypt for the Egyptians."

But, not content to work for the liberation of their own country, they have intrigued in Tunisia and Algeria, in order to create a vast movement of Musulman nationalism, thus proving that they are not, as they claim to be, *Egyptian nationalists*, but *Musulman nationalists*. This will cause no surprise if one will only bear in mind the close solidarity of Musulman nations, how their religion has cemented them into one perfectly homogeneous block, in spite of the diversity of races, of origins, and of customs. The Musulman of India differs strangely in appearance from the Bedouin of Arabia; whilst the latter bears little resemblance to a Turk, an Egyptian, or an Algerian or Moroccan Berber; and these in turn do not think or act in the same way as their co-religionaries in Persia, Sumatra, or China. They are sometimes even disunited. The Arab tribes of the Yemen are constantly in revolt against Ottoman domination; the nomads who wander between Mecca and Medina do not hesitate to plunder the caravans of the pilgrims who repair to the Holy Cities; the Algerian Kabyles treat the Arabized population with contempt, and these in turn detest the Djerbians and the Mozabites; the Chambaas of the desert are always ready to hold up to ransom the peaceful inhabitants of the Oases. But these are intestine quarrels, differences between people belonging to the same family; but, should any foreign intervention occur, then immediately the brothers who were at enmity the day before forget their dissensions in the more urgent need of meeting the infidel. Islam has realized the

absolutely extraordinary work of being able to unite and to bring into communion with the same ideal, the most diverse peoples, the most unlike in every way, and the most distant from one another; so perfectly has this solidarity been effected that any movement in any one point of Musulman territory necessarily has its repercussion on all other points. This is exactly the case with the intrigues of the Egyptian National Party.

The inflammatory speeches of Moustafa Kamel Pasha and Mohammed Farid Bey, the violent campaigns of *Al Mooyad*, of *Al Lewa*, of *Al Garidah*, and of *Al Minbar*, the call to rebellion of Loufti Bey es Sayad and of the Sheikh Aly Youssef have found an echo in other places besides Egypt: North Africa has thrilled to the voice of these tribunes of Islam. Tunisia was the first to hear their call, which, coming nearer and nearer, was extended to Algeria and then to Morocco. So long ago as 1906, during a stormy sitting of the House of Commons, Sir Edward Grey, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, noted the rapid development of the nationalist movement: "All this year," said he, "fanatical feeling has gone on increasing in Egypt, but it has not stopped there, it has spread throughout the whole of North Africa."

Since then, the movement has become still more accentuated, not only on account of the Italian expedition against Tripoli, which has strengthened the feeling of solidarity among all Musulmans, but more especially because of the incitements and intrigues of the Young Turk party, under German encouragement.

The evolution of this Party is extremely curious. The Young Turk revolution was organized and launched by a certain number of Turkish intellectuals,

of whom the majority were Christians and Jews educated in the schools and colleges of Europe, who had derived from their Western enlightenment the idea of introducing progress into the Musulman world. It is beyond doubt that at the outset this movement of regeneration was inspired by liberal ideas, and that it did its best to copy the French Revolution. But, as soon as the Young Turks had obtained power, they came into collision with the fanaticism of the mass of the people; they were accused of impiety and of heresy, and under pressure of public opinion the non-Musulman elements of the revolution were swiftly ejected. The Ottomans who remained at the head of the movement hastened to make concessions to the people, so that the original idea of the revolution was completely altered. They went even further, and did not hesitate to make such a display of intransigent nationalism as gave rise to various incidents with the European Powers, notably with Italy.[1] The Great War, and the complications following from it: the partition of Turkey, the claims of Greece, the occupation of new territory by England and France have not failed to excite to a high pitch the passions of the Musulmans, and to accentuate their religious nationalism.

[1] Albert Fua, "Hist. of the Committee of Union and Progress."

CHAPTER XVI

France's foreign Musulman policy—We should help Turkey—The lessons of the Wahabite movement—In the Musulman world the Arab is an element of disorder, the Turk is an element of stability—The Arab is doomed to disappear; he will be replaced by the Turk—A policy of neutrality towards the Arabs: of friendly support towards Turkey—Conclusion.

THE slow work of breaking up the Musulman block, which should form the foundation of our policy in North Africa, should also be the basis of our foreign Musulman policy. Islam is the enemy, not because it is a religious doctrine differing from our own philosophical conceptions, but because it is an obstacle to all progress, to all evolution.

We should, therefore, scrupulously avoid any policy that could add to the power and prestige of those nations who are strict adherents to the doctrines of Islam. On the other hand we should support those who have only received a light impression of this doctrine, and whose faith is free from bigotry.

The Turks are the least Islamized of all Musulman peoples.

The Arabs of Arabia, on the contrary, are those who have received its deepest imprint. And naturally so, since Islam is nothing but a secretion of the Arab brain: the dogmatic crystallization of Arab thought. To support the Arabs is, therefore, to help to give a new lustre to Islam, that is to say,

to a politico-religious conception of fanaticism and xenophobia.

Throughout all its stages Islam has witnessed a desperate struggle between the Arab tendency and the tendency of the non-Arab peoples, converted to Islam by force, who sought instinctively to recover their liberty. This tendency of the Arab people to revert to the pure doctrine of the most rigid Islam is illustrated in our own time by the Wahabite reformation.

Palgrave, who had the opportunity of studying this movement on the spot, has correctly grasped its inspiration, its aim, and its consequences. "Mohammed-ibn-Abd-el-Wahab," he says, "resolved to consecrate the remainder of his life to the restoration of this primeval image of Islam, the Islam of Mahomet, of the Sahhabah, and now his own; convinced that this alone was the true, the unerring, the heaven-revealed path, and all beside it mere human superaddition. . . . With a head full of his project and a heart set on carrying it into execution, Mohammed, the Wahhabee, returned to his native Nejed, after an absence . . . of six years, most of which he had passed in Damascus." He declared that the cholera, then epidemic in the Nejed, was a sign of divine wrath, and that the best means of fighting the scourge was a sincere return to the fervour of former days. As a means to this end, there was set up a council of Medeyites or Zelators. "No Roman censors in their most palmy days had a higher range of authority, or were less fettered by ordinary restrictions. Not only were these Zelators to denounce offenders, but they might also, in their own unchallenged right, inflict the penalty incurred, beat and fine at discretion, nor was any certain limit

assigned to the amount of the mulct, or to the number of the blows." Not to be present five times a day at public prayers, to smoke, to take snuff, to chew tobacco, to wear silk or gold, to speak or to have a light in one's house after the evening service, to sing or play any musical instrument, to swear by any other name but that of God; in a word, all that seemed to depart from the letter of the Koran and from the strict commentary of Mohammed-Abd-el-Wahab, became a crime severely punished. "Rank itself was no protection, high birth no shelter, and private or political enmities now found themselves masters of their aim. Moreover, Wahabism, being the very essence of Mahometanism, brings ruin as its natural consequence. Systematically hostile to commerce, unfavourable to the arts and to agriculture, it kills everything it touches. Whilst on the one side it waxes fat on the substance of conquered countries, on the other its blind fanaticism urges it to make insensate war upon all that it is pleased to stigmatize by the name of luxury or self-indulgence; it proscribes tobacco, silk, personal adornment, and by endless petty vexations persecutes the somewhat unorthodox trader who prefers a ship to a mosque, and bales of merchandise to the Koran."[1]

Palgrave's observations, collected with impartiality, enable us to understand into what a state of decrepitude those nations fall who blindly follow the Koranic doctrine, and at the same time how wanting in political prudence we should be if we befriended these people.

This has been England's great mistake from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Ignoring the peculiar psychology of Musulman peoples, and judg-

[1] Palgrave, "A Year in Central Arabia."

ing only from appearances, she thought it worth while to intrigue against Turkey with the small native States of Arabia; but has only succeeded in creating so many centres of fanaticism and xenophobia.

France has not been much wiser: abandoning the prudent and well-advised policy of the Monarchy, which always tended to an entente with the Grand Turk, we have failed to grasp the true rôle of the Ottoman Empire, we have finally handed it over to German influence, and have set it against us, at a time when its help would have been of the greatest use to us, by upholding the aspirations of the Balkan States, little worthy of our interest, or by contracting illusory alliances with Arab tribes who have a supreme contempt for us.

From our particular point of view, as a State having fourteen or fifteen million Musulmans under our tutelage, we have no interest in protecting the fanatical section of Islam, whose aim and object is to rid their co-religionists of all foreign domination.

These same fanatics do not regard with any more favourable eye the domination of the Turk. They submit to it, for the time being, because they are not in a position to break away; but inwardly they curse it. For them the Sultan is by no means the real Commander of the Faithful; he is no more than a usurper, whose ruin is to be desired by every true believer. This feeling is easily explained: The Commander of the Faithful ought to be a descendant of the Prophet, that is to say, of necessity an Arab, of the Koreich; but the Sultan is not even of Arab origin, and is, moreover, a Musulman of doubtful orthodoxy.

The Turks were late comers into the world of Islam. It was in A.D. 1299 that Othman I., son of

Ortogul, laid the foundations of Ottoman power, favoured by the movement of regional nationalism which in all the provinces conquered by the Arabs set the native dynasties against the invaders. Thanks to their numbers, the Turks rapidly extended their rule over all parts of the Empire. Only just Islamized, they passed from the rank of subjects to that of rulers, so that they came but very lightly under the discipline of Islam. As they were constantly being reinforced by drafts from the tribes of their nation, they formed at all times a block sufficiently compact to isolate them from the influence of their surroundings and to remain inaccessible to Arab propaganda.

Actually, their influence overlaid the Arab influence to such an extent that at the beginning of the fourteenth century it was possible to distinguish two perfectly distinct ethnic strata in the Musulman Empire: the Turkish stratum which drew to itself every element hostile to the Arabs, and the Arab stratum formed of Arabs and of Arabized peoples.

As the Turks held the material force, they imposed their views upon the countries subject to their rule: Turkey in Europe and Asia Minor; whilst in the other provinces, notably in Arabia, the pure Arab mentality with its Koranic ideal prevailed.

The present Musulman world is divided into two portions: the Turks, but slightly Islamized, devoid of ambition, wishing to live in peace; and the Arabs, penetrated to the marrow by Islamic doctrine, by Mahometan ideas, and cherishing the hope of re-establishing the reign of Islam in all its primitive purity as soon as circumstances permit. This ideal is shared in common not only by the Arabs, but by all strongly Arabized nations, such as the Persians, Berbers, etc.

This being the case, it is clear that if the power exercised by the Turks were to suffer any serious injury, it would be to the profit of the Arabs, that is to say, of the fanatical element in Islam. The result would be an upheaval of the Musulman world, an explosion of fanaticism and xenophobia.

The Turks constitute an element of balance; they oppose their indolence to the fanatical aspirations of Arabia and Persia; they form a buffer State between Europe and the Asiatic ferment. So long as they exist we have nothing to fear from Asia. If they were to disappear, their place could only be taken by either Europeans or Asiatics; in either case Europe would be in direct contact with Asia, with the necessary result of a conflict.

It is our interest, therefore, to make the best of the Turks, to consolidate their power. There is no other people that could replace them in this rôle, for it is necessary to be a Musulman to act upon Musulmans, and necessary to be a superficial or lax Musulman to be able to moderate their fanatical aspirations. The Turks fulfil both conditions, and they are the only people who do so. It is true that strict Musulmans bear their rule with impatience; but they would never admit the rule of a non-Musulman people; and the Arabs who, according to orthodox tradition, would be qualified to direct the Musulman Empire, would only add fuel to the flame of mutual hatred and would end by letting loose the Holy War.

The Turks could cause no uneasiness to any European people. They do not dream of any territorial acquisition; content with their lot, they want nothing. Besides, from want of imagination and from their indolent temperament, they are

incapable of conceiving any vast project. In short, they will never raise themselves among civilized nations to a position which would permit them at any time to indulge in grandiose ambitions. Their culture is superficial. What they have copied of our institutions is nothing but a caricature; in reality they have shown themselves powerless to rise to the rank of a great modern State, and the organizations they have borrowed from us can only be made to work by the help of European agents.

So there is nothing to fear from Turkish ambition; they are as a people politically fast asleep. Our interest, therefore, makes it our duty to protect them, to maintain them as an element of equilibrium in the Musulman world. As a corollary, we should avoid forming intrigues with their enemies, especially with the Arabs or Arabized nations who, themselves, are absolutely opposed to our views. The Turks are and will remain neutral. The Arabs are and will remain irreconcilable enemies of Western civilization. They are not only endowed with a mentality different from ours, but they are, in addition, animated to the last degree in their bigoted enthusiasm by the desire to impose upon others this mentality which they regard as the highest expression of human genius.

There is nothing to be done with these fanatics. They bow to the force of circumstances for the time being, but as soon as they are in a position to revolt, they consider rebellion as a sacred duty. There is no evolution to be hoped for from them; they are irremediably fixed in their conception; regarding this conception as perfect, they will never agree to modify it. With regard to them, what we have advocated in respect to Islam in general, i.e., neutrality, is only an attitude of policy. We have not got to fight the

Bedouins of Arabia, because from no point of view have we anything to do with them; neither should we aid or protect them under any pretext. Let us leave them to live their own life, to their habits and their traditions—inferior beings in the midst of a civilized world leading the life of barbarians of the remotest ages, they are doomed to disappear. Other races will absorb them; the Turks especially are installing themselves little by little among them, and as the Turks are hard-working and prolific peasants, they will end by absorbing them, as they have absorbed the Greeks in certain provinces of Turkey in Europe.

This is the best solution we could imagine, as it would have the result of reducing the fanatical element in the Musulman world, and of gradually substituting for it the element of balance represented by the Turkish nation.

We are, of course, only speaking of the Turks considered in general, and as an ethnic collectivity. We are not unaware that at certain times their leaders have manifested and are still manifesting, for political purposes, tendencies to fanaticism and xenophobia. It is none of our business to encourage these tendencies, which seem to suggest Arab influence; but, between two evils we should choose the lesser; and it appears from the evidence of past experience that we should always find it easier to come to an understanding with the Turks than with any other Musulman community. But we should never forget that whenever we have to deal with Musulman people, whoever they may be, they will always, in spite of appearances, be disposed to respect the law of religious solidarity; and that any interests which may, for the moment, divide them, would have but a relative value and would never constitute a barrier to their union,

more or less disguised, against the foreigner. The Musulman, whoever he may be, submits to the strict discipline of Islam. He acts always in conformity with the higher interests of Islam. This amounts to saying that he will never really sacrifice any fraction whatever of the Musulman world to a non-Musulman Power.

It would, therefore, be perfectly puerile to waste any enthusiasm on the Turks and to take action on their behalf against any European nation. To do so would be to expose oneself to deception, for it is certain " beyond a peradventure " that, once the danger passed, they would feel no gratitude towards the Christians for having helped them, but would make haste to betray them if the interests of Islam called for it. What we have said about the Turks is, therefore, only correct in so far as it has reference to incidents which might occur in the Musulman world, and not to any conflicts that might arise between Turks and Christians. In this latter case, we should always range ourselves on the side of nations of our own civilization.

We have not been able to make this essay as short as we should have wished, inasmuch as Musulman history being but little known, we have been obliged for the sake of our argument to give a resumé of the essential events necessary for a correct understanding of the subject.

The principal ideas may be summarized as follows :

Islam is a doctrine of death, inasmuch as the spiritual not being separated from the temporal, and every manifestation of activity being subjected to dogmatic law, it formally forbids any change, any evolution, any progress. It condemns all believers to live, to think, and to act as lived, thought and acted

the Musulmans of the second century of the Hegira, when the law of Islam and its interpretation were definitely fixed.

In the history of the nations, Islam, a secretion of the Arab brain, has never been an element of civilization, but on the contrary has acted as an extinguisher upon its flickering light. Individuals under Arab rule have only been able to contribute to the advance of civilization in so far as they did not conform to Musulman dogma, but they relapsed into Arab barbarism as soon as they were obliged to make a complete submission to these dogmas.

Islamized nations, who have not succeeded in freeing themselves from Musulman tutelage, have been stricken with intellectual paralysis and decadence. They will only escape from this condition of inferiority in proportion as they succeed in withdrawing themselves from the control of Musulman law.

Among these peoples, the Berbers of North Africa seem the best fitted to break away from this tutelage. They are but superficially Arabized; they have a long Latin past; they are no longer subject to the discipline of a Musulman Government; it is possible for them, therefore, so to evolve that they may some day re-enter the Latin family. This, of course, will be a work of time; but it is not beyond the power of the Protectorates, and should be undertaken and followed up by every possible means, if the French wish to make of Northern Africa a province of French mentality and aspirations.

THE END